

F1 2022 How high can McLaren climb?



AUTOSPORT

27 JANUARY 2022

MCLAREN'S BID FOR ITS NEXT F1 CROWN

Lewis Hamilton was its last
champion but famous team
is ready for the final step



PLUS

McLaren's revival

Future Audi engine deal?

'Innovative' angle on new rules

Modern windtunnel on the way

WRC EPIC Loeb beats Ogier
in Monte Carlo stunner





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START-1



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One legend's quest for a title and another's awesome cameo

Getting to the top of Formula 1 can take a long time. The size of modern teams and the nature of the rules mean changes in the competitive order come along more rarely than they used to.

The much-vaunted new rules should go some way to addressing that over the coming seasons, but it's *likely* that the leading teams will remain at the front, even if they have to work harder for wins and titles.

Ferrari and McLaren are the most likely candidates when it comes to selecting those with the best chance of challenging Red Bull and Mercedes. We will look at Ferrari in the next issue (3 February), but this week the spotlight is on McLaren.

The legendary team's recovery since it finished ninth in the 2017 constructors' table has been impressive. Making the final step to title contender is the hardest, but the team knows what it needs to do – and is making changes to strengthen its hand. Luke Smith hears from the key players, including supremo Zak Brown, on page 18.

Another famous name returned to the top last weekend. Sebastien Loeb should be in any fan's list of the greatest rally drivers of all time and, at the age of 47, the Frenchman scored his record 80th WRC victory in an epic Monte Carlo Rally. His fight with Sebastien Ogier was a reminder of the contest we've seen too little of over the past decade, and was a fine way to kick off the Rally1 era.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
3 FEBRUARY**

Leclerc and Sainz
Can Ferrari's stars take
the fight to Mercedes
and Red Bull?



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McKlein, Sutton/Motorsport Images; McLaren

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Wayne Taylor
Racing is looking to
uphold a superb
Daytona record



ACURA SURVIVES CONTACT TO HEAD DAYTONA GRID

DAYTONA 24 HOURS

Wayne Taylor Racing claimed first blood at the Daytona 24 Hours last Sunday as it kicked off its bid for a fourth straight win – and fifth in six years – in the IMSA SportsCar Championship opener. Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque claimed victory in the team's Acura to secure pole position for the big race this weekend and the first smattering of championship points.

The WTR Acura ARX-05 Daytona Prototype international with Taylor at the wheel crossed the line at the end of the 100-minute race (named as the Motul Pole Award) with a clear margin over the JDC-Miller Motorsports Cadillac of Richard Westbrook and Tristan Vautier. But the eight-second gap gave few hints of a thrilling race in which WTR had to come from the back of the DPi field and then survive a last-lap clash with the JDC-Miller Caddy DPI-V.R driven by Westbrook.

The race was won by WTR courtesy of a super-fast out-lap from Taylor at the second round of pitstops. He posted a 2m03.741s, compared with Westbrook's 2m06.035s a lap earlier. The quickest time of anyone on that all-important first lap on fresh but cold Michelin rubber – no tyre warmers in IMSA, remember – allowed team owner Wayne Taylor's elder son to leapfrog the JDC-Miller car at the front of the field.

Taylor had a margin of half a second over IMSA returnee – and DPi debutant – Westbrook after the stops. The gap never went out to more than a second

over the final 20 laps. Starting the final lap, the JDC-Miller driver made a late lunge. There was the slightest of contact, Westbrook spinning and Taylor wobbling wide.

Westbrook had overtaken Taylor shortly after taking over the car in which Vautier had led from pole to the first round of stops. He pulled away to the tune of a second and a half in a battle for third place. But when the positions were reversed after the final pitstops, the Briton was unable to repeat his earlier overtaking move.

The WTR car had made quick progress from the back of the seven-car DPi field after a lap from Albuquerque that would have put the car second on the grid behind Vautier was scrubbed out for a rear-wing infringement.

"It's always nice to be in Victory Lane at Daytona," said Taylor. "Although it isn't the 24, it still means a lot. I think the team did a great job and we've had our ups and downs already this weekend. The team stayed on track and executed really well."

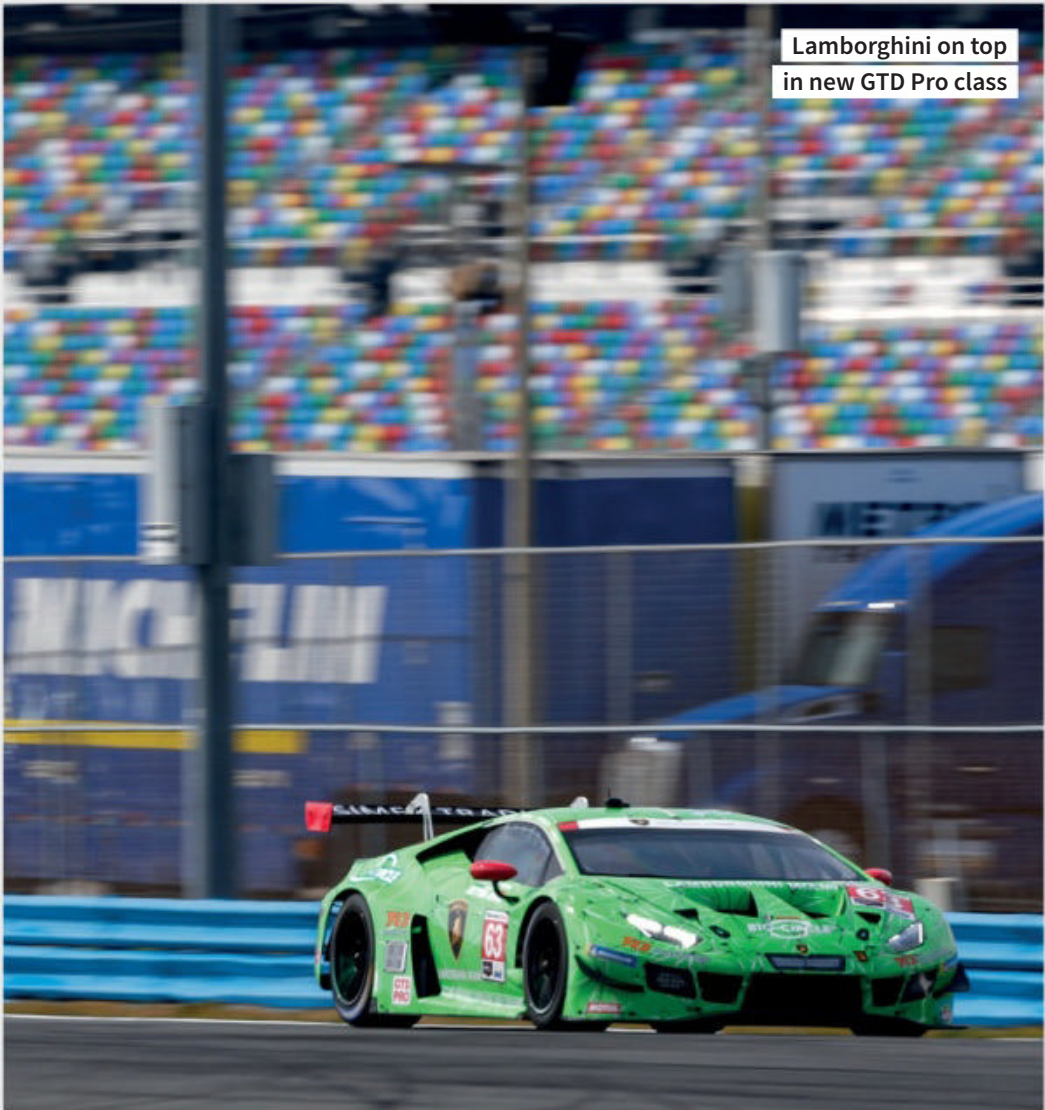
Kamui Kobayashi brought the Action Express Caddy he shared with Jimmie Johnson into third place on a day when four of the seven DPis lost vital seconds over the 61 laps of this sprint race.

Oliver Jarvis jumped into the lead in Meyer Shank Racing's Acura after the first round of stops and held the top spot in the car he shared with Tom Blomqvist through to an early second stop. Shank's fuel strategy required a caution period to pay off, and Jarvis had to engage in some serious fuel saving over the final laps.

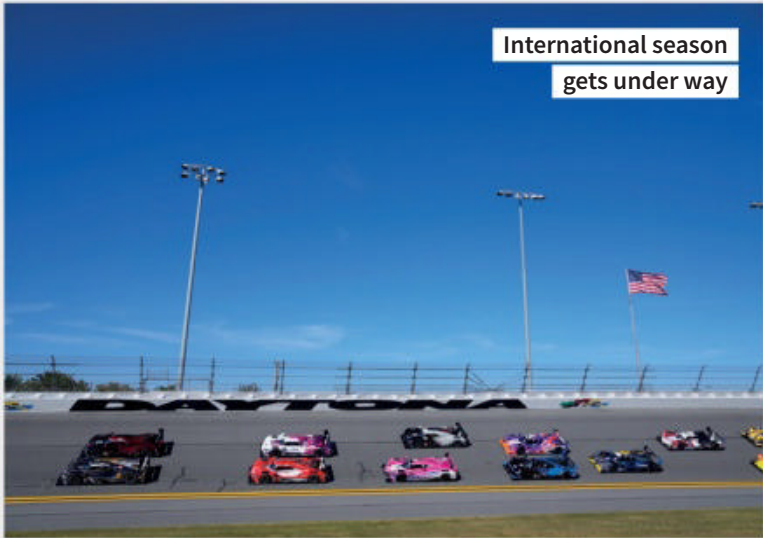
The lead Action Express car shared by Tristan Nunez



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IMAGES



Lamborghini on top
in new GTD Pro class



International season
gets under way

and Pipo Derani was on a more extreme version of the same strategy and needed to pit for a late splash to make the finish. The two Ganassi Cadillacs finished between the Shank car and Action Express’s primary entry in fifth and sixth positions after landing drivethrough penalties for exceeding the pitlane speed limit at their first stops.

The new GT Daytona Pro class was won by Lamborghini, Mirko Bortolotti bringing the TR3 Racing Huracan GT3 Evo he shared with Andrea Caldarelli into the lead in a late-race charge. He propelled his Lambo head of Felipe Nasr’s Pfaff Porsche 911 GT3-R and then, with 13 minutes to go, the Proton-run WeatherTech Porsche of Alessio Picariello to take the lead.

The WeatherTech car Picariello shared with Julien Andlauer crossed the line four tenths behind the Lamborghini, but was penalised for failing to adhere to the prescribed tyre pressures and was demoted to fourth behind Nasr and team-mate Mathieu Jaminet, and Dirk Muller and Austin Cindric in the Proton/WeatherTech Mercedes-AMG GT3.

GARY WATKINS

 P34 DAYTONA 24 HOURS PREVIEW

DAYTONA 24 HOURS QUALIFYING RACE	
POS	DRIVERS (CAR)
1	Ricky Taylor/Filipe Albuquerque (Acura)
2	Tristan Vautier/Richard Westbrook (Cadillac)
3	Kamui Kobayashi/Jimmie Johnson (Cadillac)
4	Oliver Jarvis/Tom Blomqvist (Acura)
5	Renger van der Zande/Sebastien Bourdais (Cadillac)
6	Earl Bamber/Alex Lynn (Cadillac)
GTDPRO	
1	Andrea Caldarelli/Mirko Bortolotti (Lamborghini)
2	Mathieu Jaminet/Felipe Nasr (Porsche)
3	Dirk Muller/Austin Cindric (Mercedes)
4	Julien Andlauer/Alessio Picariello (Porsche)
5	Maro Engel/Jules Gounon (Mercedes)
6	Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas (Aston Martin)
GTD	
1	Lucas Auer/Russell Ward (Mercedes)
2	Jon Miller/Paul Holton (McLaren)
3	Jan Heylen/Ryan Hardwick (Porsche)
LMP2	
1	Mikkel Jensen/Ben Keating (ORECA)
2	Jonathan Bomarito/Steven Thomas (ORECA)
3	Rene Rast/Francois Heriau (ORECA)
LMP3	
1	Jarett Andretti/Josh Burdon (Ligier)
2	Moritz Kranz/Ayrton Ori (Duqueine)
3	Kuno Wittmer/Orey Fidani (Duqueine)





Fallows celebrates a Red Bull success at 2017 Malaysian GP

Red Bull wins and loses in staff-poach contract sagas

FORMULA 1

Disputes over Formula 1 technical staff have been settled in the past few days, with the result that Red Bull loses its head of aerodynamics Dan Fallows to Aston Martin, but gains Mercedes High Performance Powertrains head of mechanical engineering Ben Hodgkinson.

Aston Martin announced last year that it had signed Fallows to be its new technical director, but the matter went to court, with Red Bull insisting that it would hold Fallows to the terms of his contract, which ran until 2023, and Fallows and Aston Martin pushing for an early release.

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said last July that the team had little interest in letting Fallows go early. "Our situation with Dan is really clear," he said. "He's working on the [2021] car, he is working on next year's car. He's still got a significant amount of time. He only signed the contract at the end of last year, so there's a significant period of time before mid-2023 comes up. We'll obviously keep him busy during the rest of his contract."

Both teams announced last week that they had reached a settlement that will allow Fallows to join Aston on 2 April. The terms of the agreement were not made public.

In a short statement, Aston Martin Performance Technologies group CEO Martin Whitmarsh welcomed the deal. "We are pleased to have reached an agreement with Red Bull which releases Dan early from his contract and are looking forward to him

joining the team," he said.

Horner said: "We would like to thank Dan for his many years of excellent service and wish him well for the future."

Meanwhile, Red Bull, which has set up its own engine facility in the wake of Honda's withdrawal from F1, made a number of high-profile poachings from Mercedes last year. Hodgkinson was announced in April as the new technical director, but it was unclear when he would be able to join because he was contracted to Mercedes HPP.

With tensions between Red Bull and Mercedes high throughout the 2021 title campaign, there seemed little chance of an agreement being put in place. But last Friday both teams confirmed that Hodgkinson would be able to start in May this year after a mutual settlement.

Hodgkinson has held his current role at Mercedes HPP since 2017, and has worked at the manufacturer's Brixworth headquarters for 20 years.

Five other Mercedes staff members were announced as moving across to Red Bull last year. Head of manufacturing Steve Blewett is to become Red Bull's power unit production director. Electronics team leader Omid Mostaghimi will be Red Bull's head of powertrains, electronics and ERS. F1 power unit concept team leader Pip Clode is to become Red Bull's head of mechanical design ERS. Engineering team leader Anton Mayo will be head of power unit design ICE, while F1 trackside and final inspection manager Steve Brodie will become Red Bull's group leader of ICE operations.

JONATHAN NOBLE

More work on US GP bumps

FORMULA 1

United States Grand Prix host the Circuit of The Americas is undergoing further resurfacing work in an attempt to finally get rid of its bumps.

Bumps have been an ongoing issue at the Austin venue, leading to complaints from Formula 1 drivers and MotoGP riders. After problems at the 2019 US GP, circuit boss Bobby Epstein told Autosport that heavy rains in 2015 had contributed to the issues. "We excavated nine feet deep to put the track here, and brought in special soils," he said. "However, clearly the flood of 2015 caused some very serious heaving, and we haven't fixed those areas since then, and it's just gotten worse."

"There's been some washout around pipes. There are pipes under the track, and in 2015 the water followed those pipes, not just inside but around them. It caused erosion that left this void, and then you get some heaving and shrinking."

Some have questioned the quality of the original construction and the repairs.

There have been several attempts at removing the bumps. Resurfacing was undertaken at Turn 1, Turn 9 and along the back straight ahead of the 2020 season, while the latest work has focused on Turn 2, Turn 10, and Turns 12-16.

"COTA hired consultants to review asphalt designs and diagnose the parts of the track in need of resurfacing," said a statement. "Ground penetration radar and laser mapping equipment and software was used to map the track and identify the different repairs needed. From there, COTA worked to repave Turns 12 through 16 and build a concrete pad to reinforce the areas at Turn 2 and 10. Additionally, COTA worked with contractors to ensure the new asphalt and concrete foundations were even and flush, creating an ideal track for upcoming races and events."

ADAM COOPER



Ogier gears up with another LMH test run

WEC

Rally legend Sebastien Ogier has undertaken a second test aboard the Toyota Le Mans Hypercar as he gears up for a move into endurance racing in 2022. The winner of eight World Rally Championship titles was at Motorland Aragon for the GR010 HYBRID's first test of the year at the start of this week.

Ogier travelled to the Spanish track after finishing second in the Monte Carlo Rally WRC opener at the weekend to take part in a test that ran from Sunday to Tuesday. It followed his first run in the GR010 in last November's official World Endurance Championship rookie test in Bahrain. But his programme on the race circuits and the rally stages this year is still a few weeks

away from being confirmed.

He explained in Monte Carlo that he is "working on a plan right now and I think very soon, the beginning of February you will hear about it". He added that "there is some work going on to be already at the Le Mans 24 Hours this year".

Ogier's race programme, which appears most likely to be in LMP2, will define how many WRC rounds in Toyota's new GR Yaris he contests. The Monte was his only confirmed appearance as things stand.

A second run in the Toyota LMH shouldn't be interpreted as a signal that the Japanese manufacturer will run a third car for Ogier at Le Mans in June. Toyota announced its 2022 motorsport programme late last year, including another two-car WEC



campaign, and a spokesman said he could "confirm there is no change to the plans we announced in December".

Toyota tested in Spain with a single car and five of its race drivers plus reserve Nyck de Vries. Only Kamui Kobayashi was missing: he took part in Sunday's qualifying race for

this weekend's Daytona 24 Hours in an Action Express Cadillac, whereas Mike Conway and Jose Maria Lopez travelled back to Europe after testing on Friday and Saturday with the same team.

GARY WATKINS & TOM HOWARD

➔ P40 EPIC MONTE

New Porsche talent Ye in push for 2023

ASIAN LE MANS SERIES

New Porsche recruit Yifei Ye will make his race debut with the German manufacturer in next month's Asian Le Mans Series ahead of a return to the LMP2 class in which he starred in his maiden season of sportscar racing in 2021.

The 21-year-old, who was named as a Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific selected driver in November, will contest the two-weekend, four-race Asian series, which he won last year with G-Drive Racing, at the wheel of a Herberth Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3-R (pictured). That will be a precursor to a P2 assault on either the World Endurance Championship or the European Le Mans Series in which he scored his second title success of 2021 with WRT.

Ye's programme for the season is being devised to give him the chance to impress the hierarchy at Porsche racing headquarters in Weissach and land a seat in one of the



LMDh prototypes that will begin racing in the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2023.

"It is going to be a diverse programme for Yifei in 2022 – we believe a mix of GT and prototype racing will be good preparation for LMDh," said Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific boss Alexandre Gibot. "Racing in the Asian series is a great first step to integrate Yifei into the Porsche family."

"But clearly the best preparation for LMDh is to race in LMP2. There is

potentially a door open for Yifei in the LMDh programme and we have to give him the best environment to be able to show his level of performance."

Gibot explained that no final decision had been made on Ye's P2 programme for the coming season, despite a test outing for the Swiss Cool Racing ELMS team late last year.

Ye will race in the mid-February Asian series with Klaus Bachler and Antares Au in Dubai and then Yas Marina.

GARY WATKINS



Monte Carlo could have its
glamour status threatened
by Belfast in 2023

Irish bid fails, but WRC wants round in 2023

WRC

The World Rally Championship will continue to support Rally Northern Ireland's bid to bring top-tier rallying back to the United Kingdom for 2023 after plans for an event this year collapsed.

Northern Ireland was tipped to fill the vacant 18-21 August slot on this year's WRC calendar, after a failed bid in 2021, before it was confirmed last week that the event was no longer viable. The 2019 running of Rally GB in Wales remains the last time the UK hosted a WRC round.

The Irish bid headed by Belfast businessman Bobby Willis had full

support from the WRC to the point where a schedule was issued last year with a TBC to allow time for funding to be secured. UK governing body Motorsport UK supported the bid before withdrawing that last month. It cited the financial risk, and that eight months was not sufficient time to help organise a WRC event. Autosport understands that discussions to secure funding were still ongoing at this point.

Willis is pressing on for 2023, with the WRC offering its support. "Over the next couple of months we will give Bobby all the support he needs to try to get to a position with the government over funding, so at least a decision is then being taken on a

fixed issue rather than a speculative concept," WRC event director Simon Larkin told Autosport. "The UK is an important market for us and I think Rally Northern Ireland would be a fantastic addition to the WRC. It's a pity and I hope we can do it in 2023."

MSUK CEO Hugh Chambers added: "Motorsport UK is committed to working to bring the WRC back to the UK, with full support at the highest levels of the organisation, whilst acknowledging the appropriate funding needed to ensure that any associated financial risks are manageable and contained."

TOM HOWARD

Brit Pittard given works chance by Aston Martin

GT

Nurburgring specialist David Pittard has joined Aston Martin Racing's factory roster. The 29-year-old Briton has been named as a works driver two weeks after he was listed in the NorthWest AMR Vantage GTE for this year's World Endurance Championship.

Pittard has been picked up by the British manufacturer after regular successes on

the Nordschleife, including winning the NLS endurance series in 2020 with the Walkenhurst BMW team.

"My goal is to win the biggest endurance GT races and with Aston Martin I have the platform to achieve this," he said. "AMR is one of the best organisations in the business."

Pittard will race the works-run NorthWest Vantage in the GTE Am class of the WEC with

two-time Pro title winner Nicki Thiim and car owner Paul Dalla Lana. His first engagement with Aston is in this month's Daytona 24 Hours IMSA SportsCar Championship round. He took part in last weekend's qualifying race in NorthWest's Vantage GT3 with Dalla Lana, with the pair being joined by Thiim and Charlie Eastwood for the 24 Hours.

GARY WATKINS



ASTON MARTIN



Fuoco in Ferrari factory line-up

WEC

Ferrari Formula 1 development driver Antonio Fuoco will replace Daniel Serra in the Italian manufacturer's GTE Pro World Endurance Championship squad this year. The 25-year-old will share the team's second 488 GTE Evo with Miguel Molina, while reigning champions James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi are paired together for a fifth season.

Fuoco moves up to one of the factory-run AF Corse cars after a GTE Am assault with the team in the Cetilar Racing entry (top) last year and a campaign in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup with the works-blessed Iron Lynx squad. His graduation comes in his fourth season of GT racing and is another change of driver in the underperforming second GTE Pro Ferrari, after Davide Rigon was replaced by Serra for 2021.

"I'm very happy about this opportunity, because it comes at the end of a path of growth in the world of closed-wheel racing from 2019 until today," said Fuoco. "I am happy to have this chance, and I hope to contribute to the team and Ferrari in 2022."

A spokesman for Ferrari said: "We want to see how Antonio works with



another team and more closely with our engineers. We know from last year that he is quick — and he's Italian."

Brazilian Serra remains on Ferrari's books and will have "a major programme" in 2022, according to the spokesman. That could be in the GTWCE enduros, with a likely return to the WEC for the Le Mans 24 Hours in June.

Envision Formula E driver Nick Cassidy will join the GTE Am ranks of the WEC with AF and Ferrari. The New Zealander (above), who made a one-off in the DTM with the team last year, will share a 488 with Francesco Castellacci and Thomas Flohr in place of Giancarlo Fisichella.

GARY WATKINS

FOSTER SECURES MOVE ONTO INDYCAR LADDER

INDY PRO 2000

Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award finalist Louis Foster will move into the IndyCar-supporting Indy Pro 2000 series this season with Exclusive Autosport.

The 18-year-old was runner-up in Euroformula Open last year, but is now studying for a degree in the US. He joined 2021 teams' title winner Exclusive for an IP2000 test at Indianapolis last October (below) and topped the times, and is targeting the title in his rookie season.

"I moved to America in August of last year and I'm delighted to get this opportunity to race here while continuing my studies in LA," said Foster. "Last year was a massive learning curve for me in Euroformula Open, as it was my first year competing full-time outside the United Kingdom. Now we've taken another big step to head to another continent to live and race."

"I'm really happy with how the Indianapolis test went and if that's a reflection of how our year could go, I'm really looking forward to the challenge. The team is really friendly and well organised, and I'm excited to work with them more."

HAYDN COBB



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Armstrong, Vesti in as F2 nears complete grid

FORMULA 2

There are still almost two months until the new Formula 2 season kicks off, yet 19 of the 22 seats have already been filled, including three in the past few days.

It had not long been announced that he was leaving the Ferrari Driver Academy when Marcus Armstrong was named at Hitech Grand Prix, where he will join Red Bull Junior Juri Vips. This is an interesting one: the duo were team-mates at Prema in Formula 4 in 2017, when Armstrong won the Italian title and Vips the German. Both then looked very good in Formula 3 in 2018 and 2019, with Armstrong finishing runner-up in the latter season.

But it's fair to say that Armstrong's momentum has

stalled in his two F2 seasons to date. With ART Grand Prix, he finished second on his series debut at the 2020 opener, but has not once finished on the podium since then in a non-reversed-grid race. His only win came in 2021 with DAMS, in Jeddah.

Armstrong's move to Hitech reunites him with team boss Oliver Oakes, who looked after the Kiwi's career from karting until he was picked up by the FDA. "Oliver brought me to Europe a few years back and I saw Hitech in the early days," said Armstrong. "Since then, it's transformed into one of the powerhouses of F2 and F3."

Meanwhile, Mercedes F1 junior Frederik Vesti remains with ART for his step up from F3, where he finished fourth in the 2021 rankings. The Dane partners Theo



GALLOWAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Pourchaire in a tasty line-up. Van Amersfoort Racing has completed its squad for its step up to F2, with Belgian F3 midfielder Amaury Cordeel joining Jake Hughes.

In F3, 2019 British F4 champion Zane Maloney is to undertake his rookie season

with reigning champion team Trident. The Barbadian starred in Formula Regional last year, and took a win in Monaco. Russian Alex Smolyar, twice a winner in 2021 with ART, has made the switch to MP Motorsport.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Champ Gotz part of Merc, BMW switches

DTM

Mercedes and BMW look set for a thorough reshuffle of their DTM drivers and teams as preparations mount for the series' second season as a GT3-based formula, and that includes 2021 champion Maximilian Gotz.

Gotz (right) is poised to leave HRT, despite the two parties having previously been keen on continuing their partnership. The 35-year-old is now expected to join Team Winward to partner seven-time race winner Lucas Auer, who gave up the lead at the Norisring to allow Gotz to snatch last year's title from Ferrari driver Liam Lawson.

Gotz's 2021 team-mate Vincent Abril has already left Mercedes in favour of GT World Challenge in a McLaren, paving the way for an all new line-up at Hubert Haupt's HRT squad. Luca Stolz, the 2018 Blancpain Endurance champion who made a strong impression in a wildcard DTM outing last year, is expected to lead the team, joined



TRIENITZ motorsport IMAGES

by 2021 GetSpeed Mercedes driver Arjun Maini, who has already signed up for an Asian Le Mans programme with Haupt.

Maro Engel is expected to return to the DTM — where he won a race in 2017 — as the second driver at the expanded GruppeM squad. He is likely to be partnered by Daniel Juncadella, who is said to have impressed the team during their 2021 partnership.

GetSpeed is out of the Merc DTM roster, leaving the line-up at six cars, while Philip Ellis will be departing the series after a year at Winward and is racing in IMSA instead.

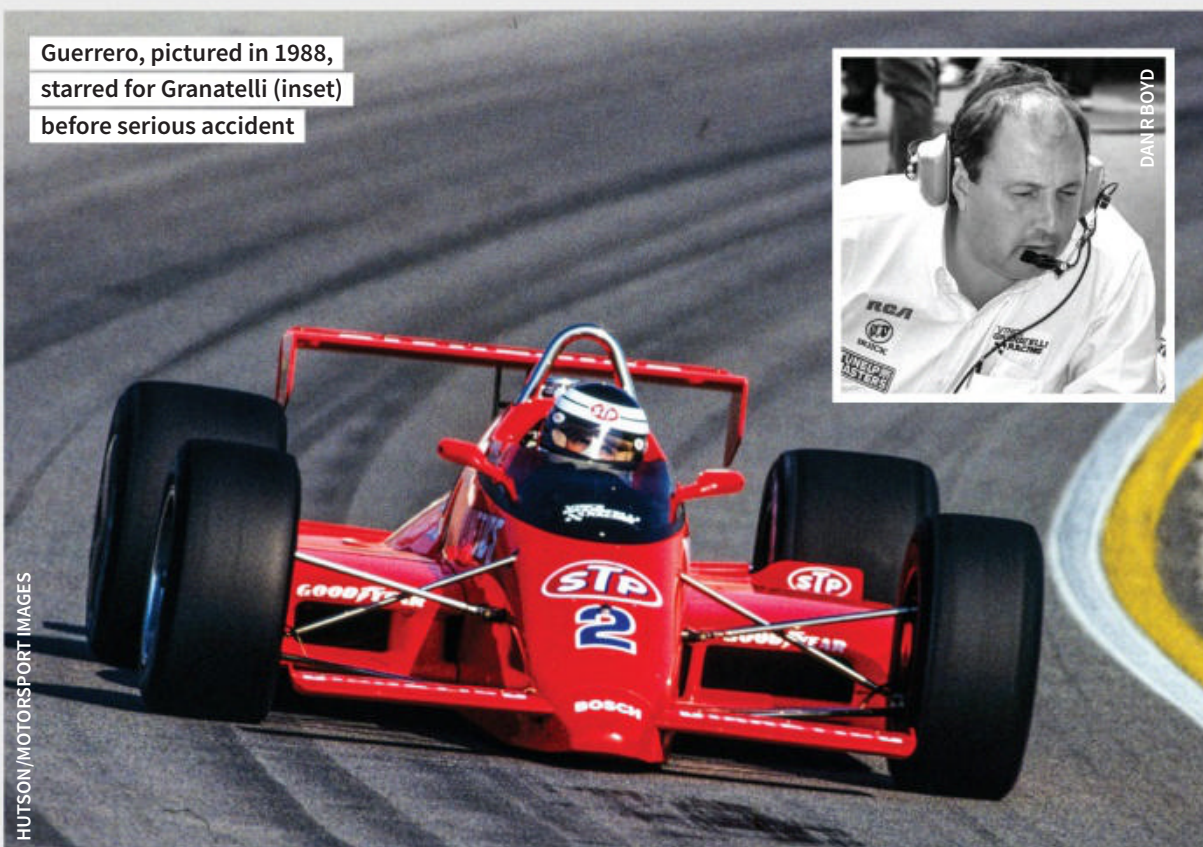
Meanwhile, DTM race winner Philipp Eng

and 2012 champion Bruno Spengler are tipped to return to the series with BMW. The Munich marque is set to keep its two-time champion Marco Wittmann at Walkenhorst Motorsport to drive the new M4 GT3, with Sheldon van der Linde expected to remain at Rowe Racing. Timo Glock looks likely to switch to the GT World Challenge Europe after struggling in 2021.

Over at Audi, 21-year-old Swiss Ricardo Feller, the reigning ADAC GT Masters champion, has joined the Abt line-up alongside Rene Rast and Kelvin van der Linde.

SVEN HAIDINGER

Guerrero, pictured in 1988,
starred for Granatelli (inset)
before serious accident



Vince Granatelli 1943-2022

OBITUARY

Winning Indycar team owner Vincent Granatelli died last weekend at the age of 78 after contracting pneumonia and then COVID-19.

Granatelli seemed initially destined to live in the shadow of his father, charismatic STP petroleum CEO Andy Granatelli. Vince started at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 1961 as a mechanic on the Novis, and would go on to work on the legendarily unfortunate STP turbine cars. Both the Paxton machine of Parnelli Jones in 1967 and the Lotus 56 of Joe Leonard in 1968 would fail while leading the Indy 500, so he shared the family joy when Mario Andretti nailed Indy victory in the STP Hawk in 1969.

Granatelli Jr was also involved in the STP team's part-time flirtation with Formula 1 in 1970, during which Andretti score a best result of third in the Spanish Grand Prix in a March 701.

The Granatelli family quit racing in 1974, but for 1987 Vince was back. He bought Dan Cotter's Indycar team, which had found brief success in the early 1980s

but had now fallen on hard times, and renamed it Vince Granatelli Racing. He also inherited the impressive Roberto Guerrero, and they won their second race together at Phoenix. They almost won the Indy 500 too, only for a faulty clutch on his final pitstop to cost Guerrero the lead to Al Unser. The Colombian won again at Mid-Ohio, but days later a huge shunt while testing at Indianapolis left him in a coma and put him out of action for the remainder of the season, although he still salvaged fourth in the championship.

The next three years were a bust for the team, not helped by a switch to Buick engines. At the end of 1990, Granatelli merged his squad with the now Bob Tezak-owned Doug Shierson Racing and therefore acquired the services of that year's Indy 500 winner Arie Luyendyk and a contract with Chevrolet. Despite a major fallout between Granatelli and Tezak, Luyendyk drove his Lola-Chevy to victory at Phoenix and Nazareth and finished sixth in the championship. Despite this, Granatelli couldn't find the funding to continue and so shut down the team.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

IN THE HEADLINES

ARDEN GETS MEXICAN ACE

British team Arden has its first driver on board for this season's Formula Regional by Alpine series. Mexican 17-year-old Noel Leon, who made history in 2020 by becoming the first driver whose name is a palindrome to win an FIA F4 title, has joined the Red Bull Junior stable and been placed with the team. Leon not only won the NACAM F4 crown in his homeland in 2020, but went on to add US F4 honours to his CV last season.

GB3 RACERS TO MOTOPARK

Euroformula Open dominator Motopark has been raiding the GB3 ranks for its early signings for the 2022 season. Australian Christian Mansell, who took third in the 2021 GB3 standings alongside a part-season in EFO, is on board. So too is Frederick Lubin, who is currently racing in the Formula Regional Asian series and took a best of seventh in last weekend's opening round.

ZURLINDEN AT MULTIMATIC

Former Porsche factory motorsport chief Pascal Zurlinden has joined Multimatic as director of performance engineering in the company's special vehicle operations division. This brings him back into the fold of Porsche and sister marque Audi, whose LMDh cars will be based on Multimatic's new LMP2 machine.

SMITH'S PRESTIGE AWARD

While Lewis Hamilton was named as the Hawthorn Memorial Trophy winner for being the highest-placed British and Commonwealth driver in last year's F1 standings, and Ash Sutton was feted as BTCC champion, Autosport's own Luke Smith was hailed as Young Journalist of the Year at last week's Motorsport UK Night of Champions. F1 reporter Smith received his gong at the governing body's Royal Automobile Club bash after a terrific year of work in which he even got Kimi Raikkonen to open up (see last week's issue).

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WHO IS LAURENT ROSSI?

He's already upset Alain Prost and is bringing changes. Time to meet Alpine's new boss

ADAM COOPER



Celebrating Esteban Ocon's maiden win at last year's Hungarian GP

There have been some major changes at the top of the Alpine Formula 1 team in recent weeks, just a year after the previous management reshuffle.

At the start of 2021, team principal Cyril Abiteboul was ousted, just as the former Renault squad began its transition to its new identity. Renault Group CEO Luca de Meo named Laurent Rossi, his erstwhile director of strategy and business development, as Alpine's new boss, in overall charge of both the F1 team and road car division. Abiteboul's number two, Marcin Budkowski, was promoted and MotoGP veteran Davide Brivio, well known to de Meo, was brought in as racing director. Officially neither man was team principal, although as his LinkedIn profile points out, Budkowski actually held the FIA licence for the position.

Budkowski seemed to grow into the role during 2021, although the word was that Brivio, as an outsider with no prior F1 experience, was struggling to make an impact on the Enstone staff. Rumours that Aston Martin's Otmar Szafnauer was in the frame for a management role at Alpine gathered pace, but nevertheless it came as a surprise when in early January it was announced that Budkowski was on his way out. Then shortly afterwards Autosport broke the news that top Alpine advisor Alain Prost was also gone.

That story emerged ahead of an agreed official announcement, and a furious Prost didn't hold back. "I wasn't involved in decision making anymore," he told *L'Equipe*. "Laurent Rossi wants to be alone, not to be annoyed by anyone. He actually told me himself that he no longer needed an advisor."

So, who is Laurent Rossi, and how did he end up in his current job? In fact, he's one of the most academically qualified people ever to oversee an F1 team, and yet he comes from a humble background, which helps to explain the ambition and drive that has got him to where he is. He hails from Corsica, where his father was a garage mechanic who prepared cars for and sometimes competed in the local World Rally Championship event. Rossi's own passion for motorsport was further fired by family outings to the Monaco Grand Prix, but he was steered away from joining his dad's business. "When I was approaching the cars my father was telling me, 'Don't



Alpine didn't make the hoped-for progress during the 2021 season

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MOY/ALPINE

touch that, you're going to hurt yourself with a wrench. Just go and use a pen," he recalls. "Which was a not so subtle but very novel way of saying, 'Just go and study, don't do like the old man. Otherwise, you're going to be stuck in working on cars like me.'"

Rossi studied hard, earning degrees in fluid mechanics and engine engineering. After an internship with Peugeot he landed a job with Renault in 2000 and quickly moved up the ranks, becoming a project manager. But he had wider ambitions.

"I loved what I was doing," he recalls. "But I could see myself being a bit stuck or plateauing at Renault, because of my engineering background. So I asked if I could do something else. And people said, 'Why don't you stick to pistons and that kind of stuff? Because that's your area of business. You don't know anything else.' And I'm like, 'OK, I'll show you.' And I did my MBA."

Gaining a Master of Business Administration degree is the traditional way of supercharging a career in management. Rossi didn't do it by halves, quitting Renault and opting for a course at Harvard. It represented a significant financial investment.

"I wanted to make sure that if I do get an MBA, then I get it from the most recognisable institution," he says. "It was extremely expensive. I sold everything, my apartment, my car, my furniture. That was a huge commitment. I was, 'I have to go all in.' And it paid off, because I took a minimum amount of debt. And three

years after the MBA I was debt free. Asset free, as well!"

On graduating in 2009 he joined management consultancy giant Boston Consulting Group. He worked in areas such as healthcare and banking, and inevitably his background saw him called upon for secret automotive projects for Ford, General Motors and Chrysler.

He left BCG in 2012 to join Google, where he worked on the company's car project and deepened his knowledge of digital marketing and electrification. Then in 2018 he got a call to return to Renault – and this time right at the top of the company.

"Initially Renault seemed like 'been there, done that, no thanks,'" he says. "And then I understood it was to work for Carlos Ghosn on something quite game changing. So I accepted the challenge. And then it turned quickly into a promotion to strategy and partnerships, which allowed me to apply all my skill sets acquired for the past 20 years into this role, and culminated with Luca de Meo arriving and creating a brand-new strategic plan. Which is a dream for a strategy director, because you only do that once or twice in a lifetime."

Building up Alpine, and renaming the Enstone team, was a big part of that plan – and Rossi was handed the keys of the niche sportscar maker. Traditionally, F1 teams are wary of too much interference from manufacturer executives, but Rossi is an engineer by training who has developed management skills in many areas, and therefore he is better qualified than most to identify what works and what doesn't. What he didn't have was inside knowledge of GP racing – that's what he spent 2021 accumulating.

The bottom line is that Alpine hasn't made as much progress as its owners had been expecting, and fifth place in 2021, 120 points behind McLaren, wasn't good enough. It was no secret that the team was handicapped by freezing its chassis and engine development early and being caught out by the postponement of the new regulations to 2022. But with the cost cap now reining in the frontrunning teams, Alpine has to be in the mix in order to justify Renault's investment. Backed by de Meo, Rossi is making further structural changes in an effort to move the team up the grid, and the results on track will be a clear indication of whether or not he's got it right. 🏆

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Prost furious at being rendered surplus to requirement by Rossi



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How to restore F1's credibility

The FIA's review of the events in Abu Dhabi needs to start with better communication, more transparency, greater consistency and a simplification of the rules

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Has everyone calmed down now? The 2021 Formula 1 season finale has gone down as one of the most controversial in the championship's history, overshadowing Max Verstappen's triumph and leaving Lewis Hamilton disillusioned (Toto Wolff's word) with the series in which he is statistically the greatest ever competitor.

Over a month on from the Abu Dhabi farce and with pre-season testing for the new campaign now just under a month away, this is where F1 stands: the championship is finally on the verge of seeing whether its latest attempt to improve racing quality through regulation overhaul will work, but its benchmark champion is not certain to return. Now, it is still *highly* unlikely that Hamilton will walk away from F1 for good ahead of the 2022 campaign. But the fact that this scenario is being discussed at all is damning fallout from how last season's brilliant title fight concluded.

The FIA is currently conducting a review into the events from the Yas Marina track last month, the findings of which are set to be announced at the World Motor Sport Council in Bahrain on 18 March — two days before the new season starts. This is obviously a welcome step in the hope for such a situation not being repeated, but the governing body has got a big problem running alongside its probe, one it acknowledged in its statement announcing the investigation by stating that the furore over the events was

“The time has surely come for F1 – and any motorsport series – to have permanent stewards”

“currently tarnishing the image of the championship”.

The statement hit the nail on the head — what happened in Abu Dhabi has badly stained F1's reputation (far from spotless on many issues, but this column is about this particularly high-profile blemish). But the words above and the same statement saying there had been “significant misunderstanding and reactions from Formula 1 teams, drivers and fans” effectively gaslights fans and competitors, as well as the watching media.

That's a strong statement considering the word's definition, but people did not just misunderstand what happened during the final laps under the safety car following Nicholas Latifi's crash. They understood perfectly what was happening — race director Michael Masi's words were played out for the world to hear. But it is the convoluted processes that allowed for such an eventuality

that confused and enraged so many.

Better communication is the first and most straightforward lesson from this sorry mess. Like all sports, motorsport is a contest where believing exactly what is uttered by the competitors is most unwise, given the advantages to be gained by teams and drivers concealing weaknesses or hiding specific gains. That's the nature of the beast, although it's worth repeating in this super-polarised age, but those charged with regulating the competition should be as clear, and willing to explain, as possible.

So, when the results of the Abu Dhabi probe are released, the FIA needs to act on them. It must ensure a repeat situation isn't possible. Yes, a final-lap shootout to decide a championship is a promoter's dream and is probably the most thrilling situation for an observer, but that cannot come at the cost of sporting integrity.

Greater transparency from the rulemakers would also be most welcome. There's a host of situations where this would be beneficial in motorsport, but it would have been handy too in other areas that caused consternation in 2021. This includes the many arguments over flexi-wing technology and track limits.

Then there's explaining the sporting rules clearly and upholding them consistently. F1 should never have got itself into a situation as in Qatar, where several drivers stated that they were unsure what was acceptable driving following Verstappen's defence against Hamilton in Brazil. That bungled situation-handling contributed to the awful incidents in Jeddah, with Verstappen, as was his right, playing to the rules as he had been allowed to understand them.

The Abu Dhabi controversy showed how incredibly complex the rules covering F1's sporting procedures have become. So, the FIA should find a way to simplify them and explain them properly. Then it should test them thoroughly to root out loopholes.

Finally, the time has surely come for F1 — and any motorsport series — to have permanent stewards to improve consistency. This would *hopefully* reduce the tedious arguments over clashes that also tarnish F1's image. There are objections to such a move, including that having regular stewards risks them becoming susceptible to outside influence, but the same is surely just as true for the current arrangement.

Even if all these steps were taken in a bid to restore F1's credibility and ensure lasting change comes from the Abu Dhabi mess, things can and will still go wrong. That's sport — the tricky balance of expecting perfection when the nature of competition involves pushing boundaries. The pain will be felt by competitors in a way everyone else can never truly understand, and that must be appreciated. But perhaps the final lesson for the F1 sphere that's worth considering now is that when things do go wrong, there is such a thing as the right way to react. Be angry, be hurt. But be respectful. 🍀



New challenge for Wickens

The Canadian returns to racing for the first time since his life-changing IndyCar crash in 2018. It could be the start of a Zanardi-style competitive comeback

CHARLES BRADLEY

Robert Wickens returned to active competition at the Roar Before the 24 at Daytona, testing his Bryan Herta Autosport Hyundai Elantra N TCR ahead of his racing comeback in the 24 Hours support race, the Michelin

Pilot Challenge, tomorrow (28 January) afternoon.

The 32-year-old Canadian will make his first start since his hugely promising rookie IndyCar campaign in 2018 came to a violent halt at Pocono. His Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Dallara was launched over Ryan Hunter-Reay at north of 200mph, catapulting it into the debris fence, where he spun wildly before landing heavily back on the track.

Given the life-threatening potential of his crash, we should be grateful that Wickens's rehab has allowed him to get back to a starting grid, rather than be angry over the spinal cord injury that's unlikely to deliver any more recovery than he's achieved to date. He can stand, and take a few supported steps, but essentially Wickens is wheelchair-bound for the rest of his life.

Announcing his programme with Hyundai this year, he immediately addressed his situation from a mobility standpoint. "I would say honestly what you see is what you get," he said. "I'm at the point in my life now where my recovery has more or less plateaued in terms of neuro recovery. I'm not regaining any more muscle function so I think unfortunately it looks like I'll be in a

"It's so important for me to return, for good or for bad, to see if it's possible, and move on"

[wheel]chair for the remainder of my life, as long as modern medicines and science stays where it is."

You could almost feel a sense of therapeutic relief as he said this, confirming to the world that there would be no fairytale return to life exactly as it was before. You only have to watch his rehab videos to see how hard he's attempted to regain more muscle function in his lower limbs, but sadly it just wasn't meant to be.

One thing is for sure, he's going to make the very best of the situation that he's in. By a stroke of fortune, BHA's engineers are used to working with hand-control systems on its Hyundais with another driver, Michael Johnson. Wickens's comeback trail began at a Mid-Ohio trackday when he sampled the Veloster usually driven by Johnson, who was paralysed from the waist down after a dirt-bike crash at the age of 12.

Wickens explained: "The hand-control system that Michael was using is something he got very familiar with, so that speaks volumes. [But] to me, it wasn't second nature."

He set about making changes to the layout — Wickens didn't like the thumb-controlled throttle for a start, and wanted his thumbs to be on the wheel. His throttle is now on the back of the wheel, in a clutch-paddle-like system that he's used to from formula cars. For brakes, he's sticking with Johnson's system of a ring on the back side of the steering wheel.

"In most race cars you have to apply the brake pedal with a lot of force, more than one can develop by squeezing your hand," added Wickens. "We have a hydraulic actuator to help develop brake pressure. But the problem is it's not a linear feel, like you'd feel with your foot. The biggest adjustment is the balance between master cylinder size versus hydraulic assist to get that good feeling. I think that will take some time to tune, but it's easily accomplishable."

The Michelin Pilot Challenge IMSA series is a two-driver event and Wickens's partner is Mark Wilkins, a fellow Canadian and a real hotshoe of the TCR scene in the US. During pitstops, Wilkins will flip a switch to allow him to use the Hyundai's pedals as normal — aided by a fly-by-wire throttle on the Elantra — so the mechanical side is good to go. And Wickens lapped 0.354 seconds shy of Wilkins in testing, so it's a promising start.

But what about in the heat of battle? At the first corner, or attempting to outbrake someone, might ex-DTM star Wickens's natural reflex be with his feet rather than his fingers?

"What's the rule, 10,000 hours and you might figure it out?" he quipped. "On my simulator at home, I've put in countless hours trying to get there. It's crazy what you can do now with home simulation, but I can honestly say I'm not going to my legs anymore in the online racing world when I'm racing wheel to wheel. I also use hand controls on the road, so I'm confident I'm not going to react by going to my feet to do something."

Wickens admits he's really missed the buzz of real-world racing, "especially that moment before the start of the race, that moment when that door closes, it's just you and the race car to do what you have to do. That's why it was so important for me to return, for good or for bad, to see if it's possible, and move on from there. I'm looking forward to that adrenaline. The fulfilment of winning a race, as a driver — that's what I'm most looking forward to."

Potentially, his future could steer towards the new breed of LMDh in IMSA's top tier, he's interested in Formula E and, of course, would love to return to the Indianapolis 500 field some day.

For now, Wickens aims to deliver the kind of success that Alex Zanardi enjoyed in touring cars following his own horrendous Indycar oval accident at EuroSpeedway Lausitz in 2001. And that would be a magnificent victory in itself. 🏆

YOUR SAY

Before we crucify Michael Masi alone, let's make sure the organisation in race control is as it should be

GEORGE COPELAND AND STEPHEN LYDON

Call on the experience of others

As someone who held the same race director qualification as Michael Masi, until his elevation to F1 status, I drafted the following letter *before* the Abu Dhabi fracas. It was written in conjunction with Steve Lydon, initiator of the very successful Thoroughbred Grand Prix series that became Historic Formula 1, and also an international race director.

Our opinion is that Michael Masi should have another experienced clerk with him. An international clerk/race director will have spent a lifetime at the heart of things in racing, faced with instant decisions in the heat of the moment. The involvement of stewards and ex-drivers will have been much less frequent and somewhat at arm's length. When operating at overseas circuits we always engaged the local clerk for the local experience this offered.

I was once pooh-poohed at a training session by an eminent court-room judge, who sometimes stewarded, because where there was a difficult decision to be taken, I answered that I would discuss it quickly with other clerks on duty that day. Was I incapable of making my own judgement, he asked? No, I replied but saw no problem at all in seeking counsel of fellow clerks. I also noted that the Court of Appeal relied upon three judges, to re-examine the many judgements of single judges that got appealed! He was not too taken with that response and turned to another member of the speakers' panel, a very experienced and well-respected clerk. John Nicol replied that he would do exactly what I had just described. Sadly, John is no longer with us, but he is one clerk who would have coped admirably with F1.

Most clerks would have stopped the F1 race in Baku, with a chequered flag and a red flag shown together. This, surely, better reflected the race positions at that time. There are inherent dangers in a two-lap sprint finish. In this instance Sergio Perez was extremely fortunate not to have been taken off by Lewis Hamilton going straight on at the first corner in clouds of smoke. Good for a very fortunate 'Checo' but not a true reflection of the race up until then.

Now we have the Abu Dhabi race with so many wrong decisions taken in the heat of the very frantic end of a championship-deciding race situation. However, before



we crucify Michael Masi alone, let's make sure the organisation in race control is as it should be. Charlie Whiting seldom put a foot wrong, but he had the unique advantage of being very much part of the whole F1 situation, with his buddy Herbie Blash always on hand to consult with.

We would also suggest that where post-race film, not available at the time of the offence, shows a blatantly different situation to that upon which the stewards' decision was taken, that this later info should provide grounds for appeal. Why bother with cameras if the evidence they provide is to be ignored?

George Copeland

Wokingham

Stephen Lydon

France

South Pole position

Jake Boxall-Legge (F1 2022 Revealed, 20 January) writes of Formula 1 wanting venues that "complete a continental full house" – does Pirelli have any plans to develop studded/spiked tyres for an Antarctica Grand Prix?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland

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McLAREN

STILL BUILDING FOR ITS TITLE CHALLENGE

The improvement is clear for all to see, despite a drop to fourth behind Ferrari in last year's constructors' standings. But the crew at Woking know a true step to the top is still a work in progress

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY



**motorsport
IMAGES**







Brown and Ricciardo
celebrate McLaren's
first win since 2012



Ricciardo managed to
outscore Norris in the
second half of the season



Good reason for Brown
to relish a bootful of
bubbly at Monza

A

ny time you visit the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking, it's impossible to come away without being deeply impressed by the team's rich and successful history. Lining the main boulevard on the ground floor are cars that have amassed victories and championships across Formula 1, IndyCar, Can-Am and Le Mans. If you walk a little further towards the canteen, the walls are lined with trophy cabinets, ensuring that every McLaren employee can see the success the team and company have been built upon.

But for a long time, the trophy cabinets didn't need to be opened for any new additions. McLaren went through an incredibly lean period, failing to record a single F1 podium finish between the 2014 Australian Grand Prix and Carlos Sainz Jr's run to third at Interlagos in 2019. In that time, the team underwent significant changes in ownership, management, engine supplier and drivers, but at last had some silverware to show for it.

The floodgates didn't exactly burst open, yet it set the tone for more success. Two podiums followed in 2020, before last year McLaren finally returned to the top step through Daniel Ricciardo at Monza, leading home a 1-2 finish ahead of Lando Norris, who himself scored three further podiums in 2021. Ricciardo's McLaren MCL35M now sits at the entrance of the MTC's boulevard as the first grand prix-winning McLaren for almost nine years.

It all feeds into the question of 'what next?' For a team that established itself as a serial winner across four decades in F1, while podiums and wins undoubtedly can and should be celebrated, they're not the endgame. That's not what Zak Brown, the CEO of McLaren Racing, signed up for when he took over the reins at Woking in late 2016. The ambition was always to build McLaren back up and make it stronger.

Upon Autosport's most recent visit to the MTC last week, there's a definite spring in the step of everyone at the team as we near the launch of its 2022 F1 car, the McLaren MCL36, on 11 February. The new regulations are naturally viewed as a big opportunity for all 10 teams on the grid, yet for those playing catch-up — so, everyone

“WITH THE SIZE OF THE RULE CHANGES, THIS IS A TIME OF EXCITEMENT AND NERVOUSNESS”

except Red Bull and Mercedes — they hold greater significance. It's the great reset that everyone has been yearning for in F1, paving the way for a more competitive, balanced series.

“Especially with the size of the rule changes, this is a time of year of excitement and nervousness,” Brown admits. “It's the largest rule change, at least since I've been around, but I think in modern-day Formula 1. As much simulation as we have, I just don't think anyone really knows what they're going to have until we get probably into the second test.” But Brown adds that he feels good: “I feel like we've got a great team, a lot of momentum. We're still lacking some of the technical infrastructure, which is less than ideal, and I think as we get closer to the front of the field it gets tougher. But yes, I'm excited for the new year.”

The increasing challenge as you get closer to the front of the pack became painfully evident to McLaren last year. Brown made clear to Autosport for our 4 February 2021 issue (the cover read ‘Why McLaren can win again’, not that we're smug about calling it) that just because the trajectory had been from ninth to sixth to fourth to third in recent years, it didn't mean the next steps were second and first. And that rang true. While McLaren scored a win and a pole along with more podiums and points than in 2020, it slipped from third to fourth in the constructors' championship after Ferrari's resurgence. Nevertheless, the underlying performance and statistics made for positive reading.

“We wanted to consolidate the position or the area on the grid where we were operating, so Q3 and top 10 material on every event, which by and large we have been,” points out technical director James Key. >>

Slip to fourth in constructors' points took a little shine off otherwise successful year



MAUGER

2021's highlights have buoyed the team; there's an upbeat feeling ahead of the new season



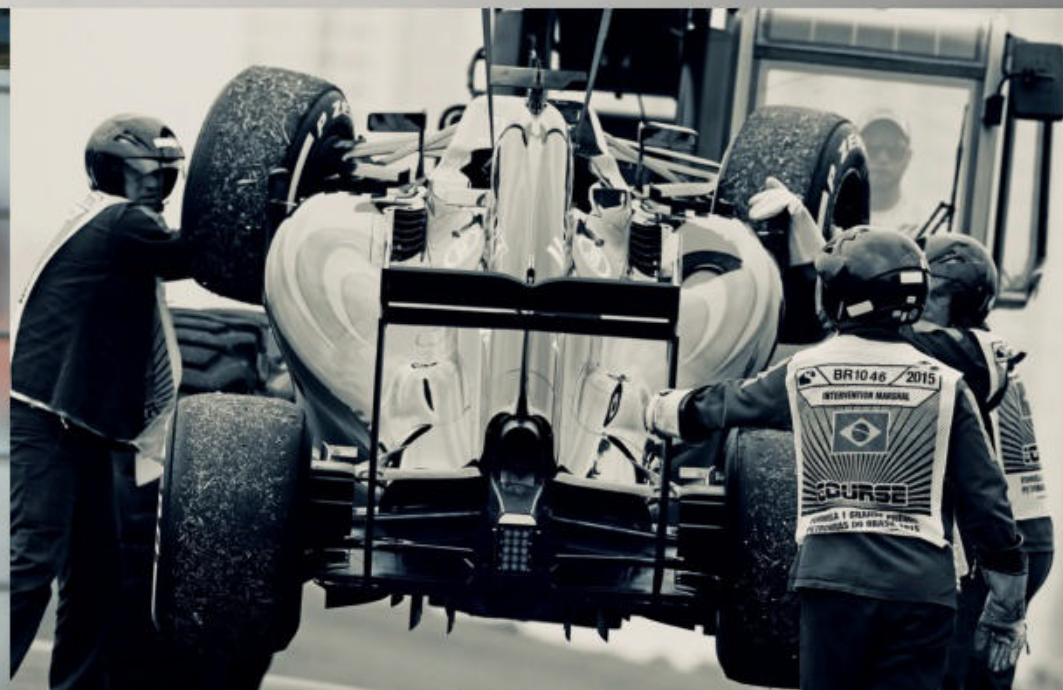
HONE

Norris took maiden F1 pole in Russia, then saw potential win slip from his grasp



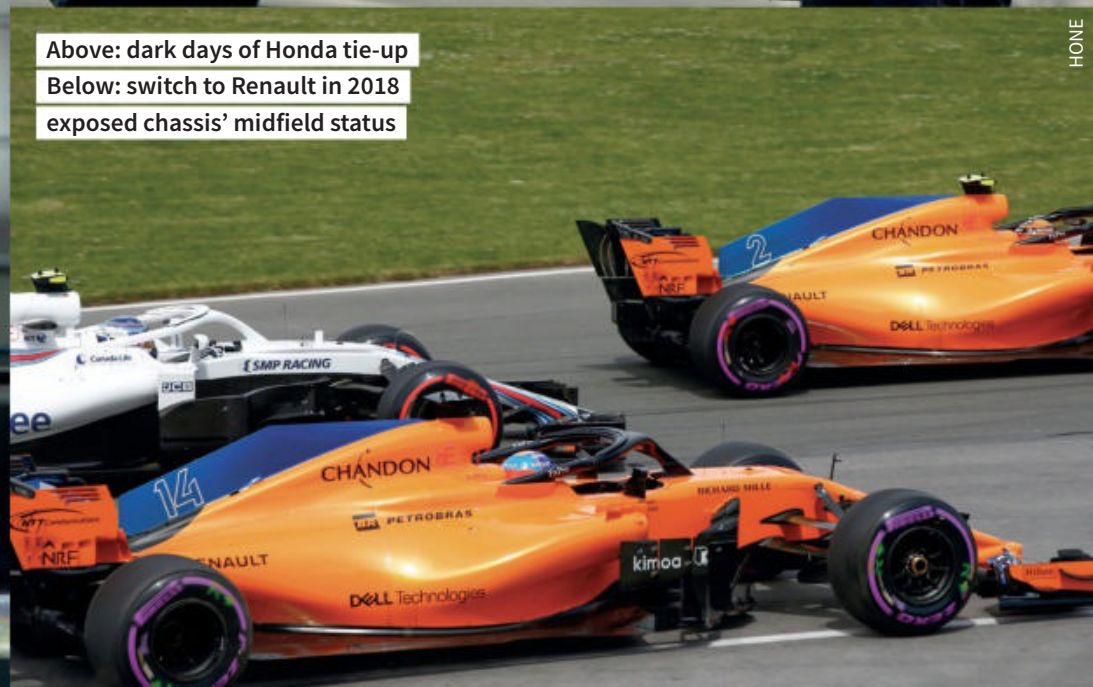
SUTTON

Technical director Key predicts development rates likely to be extremely high this year



HONE SUTTON

Above: dark days of Honda tie-up
Below: switch to Renault in 2018 exposed chassis' midfield status



SUTTON

“We’ve obviously had some great results, which is really good to see. We’ve been a bit closer to the front on several occasions and raced at the front on several occasions when tracks have suited us. I think we’ve seen a good progression there. We should be pleased with that.”

Brown hails 2021 as being a successful year for McLaren in F1, even if it did lose a place compared to the previous season. “We hit all of our KPIs [key performance indicators] last year, other than our constructor finish, which is frustrating, because that’s the one that you hang your hat on and pays out,” he states. “But we had more podiums, we had a win, we had a pole. We were closer to the front of the field on qualifying and race average – still far off, but closer. Our pitstops were better, our launches improved. That’s what we’re trying to do again this year, is set out KPIs that just show continuous improvement on all those areas. It’s very tough when you’ve got the three teams in front of you, not to mention Alpine, which is a hell of a team, AlphaTauri and others. We’d like to get further ahead on constructors’. But I think the ultimate test, the one that’s more in our control, is how close are we to the front of the field.”

Norris and Ricciardo will naturally play a big role in any McLaren success in 2022. Norris enjoyed a breakout season last year, scoring four podiums, plus a first F1 pole in Sochi that would likely have been converted into a maiden win had the rain not hit late on. He managed to put Ricciardo in the shade through the first half of the season as the Australian struggled to get to grips with the McLaren, only to roar back into the limelight with his victory at Monza.

There was a step in performance you’d come to expect from a driver growing in F1 experience but, entering his fourth season in 2022, Norris still sees plenty of room for improvement, chiefly with getting around McLaren’s ‘bad’ weekends. The team knew heading into the season that its design concept would work best on the high-speed layouts with long straights – hence its success at Monza, and why Norris was so hard to pass while leading in Sochi – but it struggled more at tracks such as

“YOU ACTUALLY GET QUITE INNOVATIVE AT TIMES LIKE THIS. IT’S A BIT MORE SUBTLE”

Zandvoort and Istanbul Park, with more medium-speed corners.

“When we get the car into a good window then I’m very confident,” asserts Norris. “Like Sochi, for example, when the car is how I want it to be like, I feel like [maximising it] is my big strength. I can really push on it and I feel most natural. But when it’s more difficult to drive, like I can drive some difficult cars, other types I struggle just a little bit more, it’s less natural for me – I have to think about it a bit. When our car has been up and down through the season, when it’s been down, I simply struggled a bit more.”

Norris views the solution to this as partly learning to “forget how to drive the car from the weekend before”. “How I drove one week before doesn’t mean it’s going to be the same this week,” he accepts. “I think what took Daniel long to adapt to in this car is still not easy for me. That’s shown how difficult it is to drive the car well and on the limit all the time.”

Ricciardo managed to outscore Norris after the summer break, boosted by his victory at Monza, which came after a first half of the season that the former Red Bull driver describes as “almost laughable”. “I definitely felt like there were a lot of people who had written me off, and I also felt that weekend, something was over me,” he recalls. “Like, I wasn’t surprised with how the result turned out. Even like the fastest lap on the last lap, there was a lot of stuff that I wanted to put out there and I just wanted to make a statement. The whole weekend, I felt like every day I was making some form of statement to myself at least.”

It was an important breakthrough for Ricciardo, who will also benefit from a winter during which he has finally returned home to Australia to see family and friends for the first time in 18 months as he prepares for his second season with McLaren. Both drivers will enter the season with a point to prove, but armed with some encouragement to take from 2021.

But so much of their performance this year will come down to the car under the new regulations. The more limited technical freedom permitted with the incoming ruleset is intended to foster closer

competition. That hasn’t stopped Key and his technical team from trying to get creative as they look to make the most of the changes. “You actually get quite innovative at times like this,” he says. “It happened in 2009 when aerodynamicists were wandering around the office saying, ‘It’s not the same anymore!’ and then they all kind of realised there’s a whole load of things you can do. It’s just a bit more subtle and complicated.”

“It’s that sort of situation with 2022. I suspect we’ll see some differences, some ideas of different cars. It will be interesting to see what people have done. I think the development rates will be likely extremely high. The nature of these regs are probably going to equal out a bit quicker than what we have now, simply because there’s so many different ways of doing things on our car.”

Norris is doubtful of any big changes to the pecking order, even as the new rules come in. “People understand how to make the cars well, and you’ve got a lot of clever people in every team,” he reckons. “There’s obviously things Red Bull do and Mercedes do that’s a little bit better than what we do, and some of those things will correlate to next year still and they’ll still have a bit of an advantage, because they know how to make the tyres work or whatever it is the aerodynamics work that little bit better. But because there’s also such a different philosophy of how to make the car quick, then there’s a new opportunity for everyone.”

There’s no grand claim that McLaren will win X number of races or fight for the championship, as exciting as the rule reset may be. Expectations are realistic and, most importantly, there’s a humility that has been bred by the harsh realities of the Honda era. McLaren went through a period of insisting that its car was great, and simply let down by a sub-par power unit. The subsequent switch to Renault in 2018 proved that wasn’t the case, and that it was a midfield team that had to get over its delusions of grandeur.

It is for this reason that McLaren is not daring to hype up 2022 as being the year it finally returns to competing at the top of the tree in F1. Mercedes and Red Bull have the most to lose, yes. But along with Ferrari, they are also the teams best-placed to make the most of the new rules thanks to their world-leading facilities. The budget cap may have curbed their advantage, but it will take time for that to truly ebb away, even with the reset on the cards for this season.

And it’s an area in which McLaren recognises it has fallen behind. Brown is quick to note that the technical infrastructure at the MTC is still lacking compared to the ‘big three’, and stresses that it will take time for the plans in place to make up for this to take effect. The new windtunnel is a big area of focus for McLaren, which has been using Toyota’s facility in Germany for close to a decade. “They’re great to work with, but the reality is it’s probably one of the least current windtunnels,” says Brown. “Given the importance of windtunnels and aero to the sport, for sure it’s a handicap compared to what others have.”

“It’s a bit of a fact that the windtunnel we use now is not as good as a lot of the other teams,” adds Norris. “It’s a bit of an old one, and that’s why we’ve invested in the new one. That’s something we really look forward to. It will be a lot more efficient to walk from the office to the windtunnel instead of having to drive to Germany.”

The upgrading of the windtunnel and the wider facilities in Woking has been a big drive for McLaren, enabled by its fresh investment secured over the past 18 months. In Brown’s eyes, the time it will take for these capital expenditure projects to be completed and get online is the main thing separating McLaren from fighting for championships again in F1’s budget-cap era.

“We have the team in place, we have the drivers in place, I think we have the resources in place, and the majority of the technical infrastructure,” declares Brown. “We need the windtunnel to come online for us to really feel like we’ve got what everyone else has and, given how competitive it is, for us to take that final step. I think we’re still more than a final step away, but that big step, I think we need to have all of our technical infrastructure in place to feel confident that we’re able to take on the other teams on equal footing.”

And yet there would appear to be one big asterisk for McLaren when it comes to competing with Mercedes, Red Bull and Ferrari: its lack of a works engine partnership. Back in 2014, ahead of its ill-fated tie-up with Honda, then-McLaren CEO Ron Dennis claimed that customer teams stood “no chance of winning the world championship”. It was a >>

COULD 2022 BRING BACK THE ‘OLD RICCIARDO’?

Daniel Ricciardo's radio message following his emphatic win last year at Monza was a perfect sign-off to a shock weekend where McLaren successfully took the fight to Mercedes and Red Bull. While the defining image of the Italian Grand Prix will be Max Verstappen's Red Bull parked on top of Lewis Hamilton's helmet following their crash at the first chicane, that was not a factor in Ricciardo's win. He'd already been leading the race and was bound for a comfortable victory, answering back to his critics after a miserable first half of the season with McLaren.

"I felt like the summer break gave me what I needed," reflects Ricciardo. "I truly did feel different getting into the car at Spa, I just felt light again. The first half of the season I guess was weighing on me, and I felt like I'd got rid of a lot of that, which was good for me."

While Ricciardo managed to outscore Lando Norris in the second half of the season, it was still a year where greater things were expected of the Australian. After his decision to quit Red Bull, he won plaudits for his performances with Renault. But at McLaren, some seeds of doubt began to creep in about his true ability – even for Ricciardo himself.

"For sure there were times when I did lose a little bit of faith and I did second-guess myself like, 'Why am I struggling so much? Do I now have a little bit of fear that I'm not pushing the car as much?'" he continues. "And I knew I didn't, but still when things aren't going well, some of these questions pop up."

McLaren's 2021 car was at times difficult to drive at its absolute limit, a view shared by

“THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I DID LOSE A LITTLE BIT OF FAITH AND I DID SECOND-GUESS MYSELF”

Norris. But as F1 prepares for a clean slate in 2022 under the new regulations, all eyes will be on Ricciardo to bounce back and rekindle some of the form that saw his stock rise so high at Red Bull. After all, this is a driver who was often a match for Max Verstappen during their time together at Red Bull, the peak coming with Ricciardo's domination of the Monaco Grand Prix weekend in 2018, his most recent win prior to Monza 2021.

One big difference for Ricciardo heading into 2022 comes very much out of the car: he's finally been able to see his family. Since returning to Europe for the delayed start to the season in 2020, Ricciardo hadn't been able to return to Australia or get his family over to a race. Over the winter break, he finally got the chance to go back, something he felt sure would energise him. "I wouldn't say it affects me in the act of driving, but particularly when maybe it doesn't go well, then it definitely has an effect," he explains. "All you want is some of that support, and family love. And also when it doesn't go well, you can feel very lonely."

When Ricciardo returns to Europe in the next couple of weeks for McLaren's car launch and the start of testing, he will likely be the most refreshed he has been in a couple of years. The early struggles of 2021 were shaken off, overcoming one of the biggest tests of his F1 career so far.

The goal now will be to put in Monza-level performances on a more regular basis, and find the consistency McLaren will need – but, like the team, Ricciardo is moving in the right direction. "I'm happy where things are," he smiles. "It's not perfect, but I'm happy."





MAUGER

theory echoed by former racing director Eric Boullier, shortly before his departure from the team, just months into McLaren's new customer deal with Renault.

But Brown doesn't see it that way at all. The customer partnership with Mercedes was something that team principal Andreas Seidl, Boullier's replacement, pushed for soon after joining, and it reaped rewards through 2021 despite the challenge of fitting the power unit into the bulk of a car designed for the Renault engine in 2020.

"I think we can win with a Mercedes engine," says Brown. "I know for a long time there's been a theory of you can't win with a customer engine. I think you can. We're very confident that our Mercedes power unit is identical to theirs. We've not seen anything otherwise. You are at a little bit of a disadvantage from an overall design concept, because [Mercedes] understandably get a view of what the architecture looks like. So there is a detriment to being a customer team, but it's not the power unit itself, it's the knowledge that you get by having a first look [at the engine design]."

It's a pure customer relationship. Mercedes' logos don't even appear on McLaren's car or clothing. The partnership has been fruitful for both sides in its first year, and it's not one through which Brown feels any political pressure, contrary to what he sees elsewhere: "We would never do what I see some other teams doing, which is vote for something that is clearly not in your best interest. They're solely doing that because of political pressure."

Brown says Mercedes is "bullish" about its power unit for 2022 following some reliability gremlins last year. Getting it right will be crucial as F1 prepares for an engine freeze that will last through the remainder of this generation of engines – which also coincides with the current contract between McLaren and Mercedes. After that, could McLaren go back down a works avenue, perhaps with

“THERE'S BEEN A THEORY OF YOU CAN'T WIN WITH A CUSTOMER ENGINE. I THINK YOU CAN”

a different German manufacturer?

Shortly before the end of last season, McLaren issued a rare statement strongly denying a report that it had agreed terms for a takeover by Audi that would pave the way for the VW Group brand to enter F1, calling it “wholly inaccurate”. VW is strongly considering an F1 entry from 2026, with both Audi and Porsche attending high-level meetings over the next generation of power unit.

"I'm hearing they're going to do something with Red Bull, on the Porsche front," says Brown when asked to give an update on the VW speculation. "I think they've spoken with a handful of people on the grid. And as you would imagine, we have conversations. But in the short term and medium term, we're very happy where we are. We're just going to wait and see if they are going to enter the sport, because I think that's not been definitively decided. If they do, then we have a contract through this term, and naturally we're going to evaluate where we are and who is in the sport, and take a decision on what we're going to do in 2026 in due course."

As much as McLaren has been working to lay the foundations for the future in recent years, Brown and his fellow senior leaders know there is still plenty more to do in the short term. 2024 has been identified as the first year when the facilities should be fully upgraded and online to allow for a potential title fight, but that doesn't mean 2022 will not hold the chance for success. "I can't say no to the championship of course, but I'm not going to get my hopes up for it as well," says Norris. "It's an opportunity for everyone on the grid to take big steps forward and potentially go for the championship."

The opportunities on offer this year will have all teams dreaming of silverware. For McLaren, adding to its recent haul will be a minimum expectation, ensuring there are more reasons for a workforce that is growing increasingly accustomed to on-track success to celebrate. While 2022 may not be the year McLaren finds itself fighting for the championship again, if it can continue its recent progress and seize what opportunities come its way, it could be another important milestone in its path back to the very top in F1. 🏆

ANDRE

PHLEGMATIC FLEM

Mercedes embarks on its last Formula E season this weekend in Saudi Arabia. Can Stoffel Vandoorne beat team-mate Nyck de Vries to write the perfect final chapter in his electric story with the manufacturer?

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY DAIMLER AG AND  **motorsport
IMAGES**

Nyck de Vries cut through the most random of Formula E seasons last year to chalk two wins and a further brace of podiums, and he led the points for seven of the 15 races. He was a most *deserving* champion. But at a time when his Mercedes employer completed its ascent to the top of the teams' standings, a coronation for stablemate Stoffel Vandoorne might have been the more *fitting*.

The Belgian beat de Vries to making a full-time electric switch when he joined debutant HWA Racelab ahead of the 2018-19 campaign. From a squad that rose from the ashes of an axed DTM programme and was a Mercedes attack in all but name, there was total unfamiliarity with this new discipline. Vandoorne navigated the adjustment period, and persistent driveshaft failures in the borrowed ZF powertrain, to land the Affalterbach team a first series pole (Hong Kong) and visit to the podium (Rome).

For the factory-fronted charge the season after, newly crowned FIA F2 champion de Vries – who'd missed out on an F1 seat – was signed to replace Gary Paffett. Vandoorne stayed put. The Dutch rookie endured the bulk of operational errors, while Vandoorne snared more history. He bagged two podiums on a maiden weekend for the works squad in Saudi Arabia, and then converted pole into a first victory on Merc home soil in Berlin. That last-gasp success catapulted

him from ninth to runner-up in the points behind the dominant Antonio Felix da Costa.

But the intra-team fortunes reversed last term. While de Vries could convert his pace when it mattered, Vandoorne was punted out of the lead by Andre Lotterer in the Italian capital. As he recovered, a proud drain cover led both Mercs to wipe out as they avoided stricken race leader Lucas di Grassi. Vandoorne then lost pole to a technicality at Valencia and was tagged by Oliver Rowland in London. Had any one of those key events turned out differently, he would never have

finished 17 points adrift of his champion team-mate down in ninth. Remarkably, Vandoorne wasn't even among the long list of 13 drivers who could have, mathematically at least, clinched the crown heading

into a final race at Tempelhof Airport, where he finished third.

"I definitely had my share of bad luck," reflects Vandoorne. "There were incidents where it wasn't my fault. I probably only needed one of them not to happen and I would have won the championship. But I cannot change that."

While Vandoorne missed the window to secure Mercedes its first title in Formula E, over the coming eight months he has every chance of bagging its last. That would complete his series journey with the marque and provide prosperous bookends for their time together. >>

**"I DEFINITELY HAD MY SHARE OF
BAD LUCK. THERE WERE INCIDENTS
WHERE IT WASN'T MY FAULT"**







De Vries and Vandoorne form one of the strongest driver line-ups in Formula E...

As the works team prepares for a final campaign in the championship, at least in this current factory form, it carries over the Silver Arrow 02 machine of 2021. The financial impact of the pandemic led to a cost-saving two-year homologation cycle. That means the gearbox, motor and inverter hardware that won a third of all races last term – in both its works and Venturi Racing customer guises – is back for more.

“I know we’ve got a very strong car,” continues Vandoorne. “We also know the mistakes we made last season. We’ve got every opportunity to rectify them this year. Software-wise, I think everyone has made steps forward. We’ve just got to optimise ours every weekend and if we manage to do that, I’m confident we can fight for the top position.”

Thanks to a largely transparent relationship with Venturi, the engineers at Mercedes can tap into four cars’ worth of data rather than two. That should help in the software arms race to ensure the efforts of High Performance Powertrains in Brixworth remain the performance benchmark.

What’s more, there’s no reason to expect a repeat of the slump in form that dogged the team and drivers in the thick of 2021. As Mercedes chased gains in its one-lap set-up to try to navigate the maligned and now ousted group qualifying format, it went massively off the boil in Monaco, Puebla and New York City. Neither de Vries nor Vandoorne troubled the top 10 for five painful races, and a run to both crowns might have slipped.

Taking a share of the responsibility, Vandoorne says: “We

simply didn’t do a good enough job. The set-up direction we took wasn’t right. When you’re starting at the back, you’re in the mess. We weren’t fully switched on and left points on the table.

“I played a part in that as well. I wasn’t vocal enough about pushing the team in the right direction. That’s why we got off track. That’s something we really learned from. We sat down after those races, and then we came back for the final part of the season in London and Berlin in very strong shape.”

Team principal Ian James and the star-studded engineering line-up that includes Tony Ross (Nico Rosberg’s F1 title-winning race engineer) and Nick Chester (former Renault technical director) recognise where they went wrong. It won’t be repeated. Furthermore, the switch to knockout qualifying – at the demise of a group system that gave too much prominence to track evolution and had a habit of placing the big hitters at the back of the grid – should help matters further.

Formula E organisers want to dial back the haphazardness that created the 11 different race winners from 15 attempts last year. Instead, they want a handful of repeat victors that remain in the headlines and become faces for the series. That’s how bosses plan to grow the audience. Relentless popular vote fanboost winner Vandoorne will be among the regulars.

So, if Vandoorne is to cap off Mercedes’ Formula E swansong by doing the heavy lifting in the teams’ title race and winning a drivers’ crown of his own, the carried-over car and the adjustments to the qualifying format do nothing to hurt his credentials. But there is the small matter of beating his reigning champion team-mate over the record 16 races that lie in wait.

De Vries, 26, might almost be accused of plagiarising Vandoorne’s CV. Both were Formula Renault Eurocup champions, kings of GP2 Series/F2, they are keen LMP2 racers, and share the role of Mercedes F1 reserve. Vandoorne, three years older, got there first in each case, in addition to completing his uninspiring F1 stint alongside Fernando Alonso at McLaren.

It’s not so odd that Vandoorne and de Vries appear to have been made in the same mould. By having such similar experiences, there’s considerable overlap in their driving styles. That and a “really good relationship” allows Mercedes’ garage to be open. All conversations feed into the goal of improving performance. Little is lost by division or by minutely tailoring each car for its specific driver.

But if the overlap is so significant, how might Vandoorne go about beating his nearest and one of his dearest? Even with the old qualifying format, it was arguably only the shunts in Rome and



...and their friendship fosters an openness within the team that pushes it forward as a whole



“HOPEFULLY WE CAN REPEAT GETTING BOTH CHAMPIONSHIPS. HOPEFULLY I GET THE DRIVERS’ ONE THIS TIME”

London that cost a title. Now that the qualifying changes will reward the faster driver, Vandoorne should have an edge. Valencia aside, he chalked three poles to de Vries’s one.

Excluding the grid for the second Saudi Arabian race after all Mercedes cars were banned from qualifying, plus Valencia, Vandoorne had the one-lap advantage on eight of the 13 remaining occasions last season. And despite the better grid slots, he also gained more positions in the races – 62 plays 41. That’s even with his artificial gain of a staggering 21 places in the Valencia energy debacle round discounted.

The reality is that there’s little to choose between de Vries and Vandoorne. That’s why they form one of the best driver pairings on the grid and delivered the goods for Mercedes last season. It also means there’s no reason why Vandoorne can’t be the one to take the trophy this time around as the manufacturer prepares to pack its bags.

Vandoorne says of his Formula E tenure to date: “It’s a very nice story if you look at the timeframe from when we started with HWA. That was obviously a team that had a huge amount of success in DTM and had a lot of really good people on board. But we knew nothing about Formula E.

“We definitely had our struggles in the beginning. We’ve built up the team from scratch, gone through a tough time and then transitioned into Mercedes. I finally got that first pole for them and getting the first victory, and now having won both championships, it’s an incredible story.

“I’m proud to have been part of this development. We’ve got one more season to go now and hopefully we can repeat what we’ve managed to accomplish last year with getting both championships. Hopefully I get the drivers’ one this time.”

While 2022 might not absolutely mark the end of Vandoorne or the race team’s participation in Formula E – Toto Wolff and James are seeking investment to keep the assets and personnel on the grid – it will spell the end of his partnership with the manufacturer in the series.

With a run of 16th, second and ninth in the championship, Vandoorne has already filled the lesser half of Mercedes co-architect Gottlieb Daimler’s motto ‘the best or nothing’. Now is his last and arguably greatest chance to fulfil the more inspiring half by winning the title to complete his Silver Arrows timeline in the most fitting way. 🏆

➔ P30 EIGHT THINGS TO WATCH THIS SEASON

FORMULA E ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVER	TEAM
3	Oliver Turvey	NIO 333
33	Dan Ticktum	NIO 333
4	Robin Frijns	Envision Racing
37	Nick Cassidy	Envision Racing
5	Stoffel Vandoorne	Mercedes
17	Nyck de Vries	Mercedes
7	Sergio Sette Camara	Dragon Penske Autosport
99	Antonio Giovinazzi	Dragon Penske Autosport
9	Mitch Evans	Jaguar Racing
10	Sam Bird	Jaguar Racing
11	Lucas di Grassi	Venturi Racing
48	Edoardo Mortara	Venturi Racing
13	Antonio Felix da Costa	DS Techeetah
25	Jean-Eric Vergne	DS Techeetah
22	Maximilian Guenther	Nissan e.dams
23	Sebastien Buemi	Nissan e.dams
27	Jake Dennis	Andretti Autosport
28	Oliver Askew	Andretti Autosport
29	Alexander Sims	Mahindra Racing
30	Oliver Rowland	Mahindra Racing
36	Andre Lotterer	Porsche
94	Pascal Wehrlein	Porsche



2022 FORMULA E CALENDAR

RD	LOCATION	DATE
1	Diriyah (SAU)	28-29 January
2	Mexico City (MEX)	12 February
3	Rome (ITA)	9-10 April
4	Monte Carlo (MCO)	30 April
5	Berlin (DEU)	14-15 May
6	Jakarta (IDN)	4 June
7	Vancouver (CAN)	2 July
8	New York City (USA)	16-17 July
9	London (GBR)	30-31 July
10	Seoul (KOR)	13-14 August

SEASON
PREVIEW

EIGHT THINGS TO WATCH IN FORMULA E THIS SEASON

Famous and infamous rookies, a dose of qualifying meritocracy, new cities and under-pressure Porsche will be sure to keep things interesting

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY



TICKTUM AND GIOVINAZZI HEADLINE ROOKIE CROP

Of the three rookie drivers gracing the 2022 Formula E grid, the two with arguably the biggest draw have found seats with the historically unfancied teams in the championship.

Dragon Penske Autosport has snared the services of Antonio Giovinazzi following his departure from Alfa Romeo's F1 team, while Dan Ticktum has called time on FIA Formula 2 to join NIO 333 alongside the enduring Oliver Turvey. There's two ways of cutting it: either they've both got low-pressure environments in which to learn Formula E's intricacies and nuances, or they're set for a season of struggle with equipment that will

seldom offer opportunities for decently sized points hauls. The two drivers are also up against it in terms of mileage, having had to call their pre-season testing programmes short and hot-foot it to Saudi Arabia for their F1 and F2 duties.

"The car is really different from F1, or the cars I've been in over the past few years," Giovinazzi explains. "[On the first day] I was really sort of confused and had a lot of things to learn. But the main issue for me is the braking, because [in F1] you can really attack so much on the braking because you have so much downforce as well. But here you cannot. I'm struggling with this.

But I remember when I drove in 2018 the first car, the Gen1, it was the same.

"I'll focus more on the sim to set up myself more on this car. But before race one I'll not have many miles for that, so it's like this, but I'm sure during the season I can improve. And this is my target."

For Ticktum, the NIO seat represents something of a lifeline after being dumped from the Williams F1 junior programme and with no other obvious opportunities to move up in the world of single-seaters. Turvey will provide stern competition, and a well-known benchmark for Ticktum to measure himself against.

WILL KNOCKOUT QUALIFYING BE A KNOCKOUT?

Formula E's group qualifying format had been a largely unpopular system of deciding the grid among the drivers. Track evolution meant that the frontrunners populating the opening group had minimal chance of making the cut for superpole, while the last group were given the best chance of progressing into the final stage.

Hopefully the knockout format will be more meritocratic. Qualifying now starts with two groups, with the initial Diriyah E-Prix session featuring one car per team in both divisions of the grid. These opening stages will be 10 minutes long with pitstops permitted, and drivers will be afforded the standard 220kW power limit in the group stages.

The top four from each will progress into the quarter-finals, where drivers will duel against each other at 250kW in a pre-determined draw: first in group A will face a time trial against fourth in group B, A2 going up against B3, A3 facing B2, and A4 tackling B1. The fastest from each will progress to the semi-finals, with the winners of those bouts going through to the pole-awarding final.

The two finalists make up the front row, with the drivers knocked out in the semi-finals occupying the second row based on their times. Those who didn't progress from the quarter-finals



will occupy fifth to eighth, while those knocked out in the group stages will be allocated a grid slot based on their positions, biased towards the group hosting the eventual polesitter. If the polesitter came from group A, for example, then the fifth-placed driver from that group lines up ninth on the grid, and group B's fifth-placed driver occupies 10th. That continues down the rest of the grid, with group B's slowest occupying the final spot on the grid.

Diriyah will provide the true test of the new format, but the drivers have already been receptive to the changes ahead of the first round. "I was quite vocal about [the old system] last year," says reigning champion Nyck de Vries. "I think generally, the changes will lead to a kind of more consistent and stable qualifying result, and I expect we will see a bit more of a common group of people – teams and drivers – who are fighting in the top 10."

FAREWELL TO A GAMECHANGER



Entering its final act, the Gen2 Formula E car has served its time and has one more season before being put out to pasture as the faster, lighter Gen3 machinery awaits its turn. For its swansong year, the Gen2 cars will be given an extra 20kW to shift the base maximum power to 220kW, with the higher 250kW mode employed for fanboost and attack mode.

Compared to the original Gen1 Formula E car, where the aesthetics led to it drawing unfavourable comparisons to Formula 1, the

second-generation model was a unique design that helped cement the all-electric championship's identity amid the world of motorsport. It was also a formula that proved very successful for the DS Techeetah package in the first two years, helping Jean-Eric Vergne secure his second title and Antonio Felix da Costa winning out in 2019-20 before Mercedes' de Vries proved triumphant in its third year.

In addition, Gen2 has moved Formula E on from a technological standpoint. With almost

double the battery capacity of the old car, the in-race car swaps were made redundant and the higher power levels gave the championship enough confidence to run the full Monaco circuit last season, in lieu of the neutered version previously employed.

In short, the technology within each car and the overall design has done a lot to shape the perception of Formula E. The third-generation car will have a lot to live up to when it enters the fray for Formula E's ninth season.



CAN DI GRASSI TAKE VENTURI TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Given that Venturi hasn't exactly been the most high-profile of teams alongside the manufacturer entities in Formula E, Edoardo Mortara's second-place finish in the drivers' championship was certainly unexpected last year. Since ditching its own powertrains to become a Mercedes customer, Venturi has made a step forward in terms of pace but hasn't necessarily enjoyed the consistency required to replicate that in the teams' standings.

But that perception can change, with Venturi having now recruited Lucas di Grassi from the departing Audi team. In the Brazilian, it has a Formula E champion with the nous to fight at the front of the pack, although di Grassi may have to contend with fewer resources than he's used to with a manufacturer squad.

He and Mortara looked competitive in testing, even if clues from the week at Valencia were scarce. The team also has Jerome d'Ambrosio as team principal as Susie Wolff moves into a directorial role, ensuring that Venturi has veteran drivers in and out of the cockpit.

Can either Venturi driver realistically challenge for the title, and potentially beat the works Mercedes team in its last year? On the basis of Mortara's 2021 heroics, di Grassi's ability and on testing form, it truly could.

A STELLANTIS STICKING PLASTER

Just getting to Saudi Arabia is a victory for DS Techeetah, the two-time teams' title winner. This year, Stellantis member DS Automobiles will bankroll the operation after SECA, the owner of race team Techeetah, turned off the money taps. That left champion drivers Antonio Felix da Costa and Jean-Eric Vergne unwilling to hop in the simulator unless they imminently received a cheque that wouldn't bounce. It's quite miraculous both have stayed.

Thanks to DS, however, there is now

short-term financial security. Founding team principal Mark Preston has switched to CEO to find backing for Gen3 after a buyout collapsed last season, while powertrain boss Thomas Chevaucher takes on the management of the squad.

On track, there are still questions over the car. It chews rear tyres in a way its benchmark-setting predecessor didn't. And as the potency of Mercedes remains, another year without so many trophies may lie in wait, even if financial distractions are fewer and farther between.



PORSCHE UNDER PRESSURE TO BREAK ITS DUCK



Porsche has a new motorsport boss in Thomas Laudenbach. We're told he didn't arrive at the expense of Pascal Zurlinden, someone who was hands on with a Formula E programme failing to meet targets.

Despite the new face, for a third season the vernacular is the same. This racing powerhouse has "absolutely no doubt that we have what it takes to win... We are firmly convinced that the [car] will be capable of leading the pack."

Laudenbach has confirmed a mild team restructure, poaching ex-Audi engineer and Abt technical director Florian Modlinger as Porsche

still chases its first electric victory. That said, Pascal Wehrlein was arguably robbed by the rules after crossing the line first in Puebla last season. Porsche also has two poles under its belt. But eighth in the teams' table last year was nowhere good enough as a decision over its future in the series looms.

It retains the sound Wehrlein alongside Andre Lotterer, who endured a torrid 2021 when he was too often at fault during a spate of crashes. He's been fortunate to keep his seat, after Mitch Evans signed a new deal at Jaguar Racing to leave Porsche short of alternatives. For Lotterer and Porsche, this must be a prosperous campaign.



BOYD

NEW CITIES ADD GLOBAL APPEAL

The start of the 2022 season has an incredible sense of Formula E familiarity, as time-tested circuits flood the first half of the season. Diriyah, Mexico City, Rome, Monaco and Berlin are well-known locales, of which all are capable of delivering unpredictable races. The season's second half, however, brings the series into new ground. Jakarta hosts Indonesia's first E-Prix in June in the northern Ancol area of the city, while Vancouver and Seoul also get races in July and August respectively.

Vancouver brings Canada back to the calendar for the first time since 2017's Montreal double-header and will use parts of the circuit previously employed by Champ Car (above) prior to its departure from the schedule at the end of 2004.

After two cancellations owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, Seoul is pencilled in as the season finale – South Korea's first international motorsport event since the 2013 Korean Grand Prix. Unlike the F1 race at the much-maligned Yeongam circuit, hosting a race in the middle

of Seoul should remove the logistical issues that made the grands prix so sparsely attended. The circuit is expected to make use of Seoul's Olympic Stadium in the Songpa district.

Following the world's tentative steps out of the pandemic's stranglehold, it's refreshing to have new venues back on the agenda rather than the collection of stopgaps. New York and London also punctuate the end-of-season run of events prior to the Seoul climax, as Formula E continues to host races in the world's biggest cities.

CAN ASKEW BECOME AMERICA'S GREAT FORMULA E HOPE?



BINGHAM

As a replacement for the Nissan e.dams-bound Maximilian Guenther, Oliver Askew has been sprung from IndyCar limbo by the newly independent Andretti Autosport to partner Jake Dennis. Askew tore up the Road To Indy categories, but found chances in the US top flight hard to come by beyond bit-part duties as a substitute driver.

He'll be Formula E's first full-time American driver, and the first US-born competitor to race in the series since Scott Speed's cameo appearances (also for Andretti) during the maiden 2014-15 season. It'll give the fans at the New York E-Prix a national hero to root for.

Ahead of his first Formula E season, Askew has targeted beating fellow rookies Ticktum and Giovinazzi, with regular points finishes underpinning his aims. "Consistent point scoring is very important in this series," Askew says. "That's a very difficult achievement with how stacked this grid is. I have many goals this season. First and foremost, we need to finish as the best rookie. I think that'd be pretty cool."

DAYTONA
PREVIEW

PRECURSOR TO A NEW GOLDEN AGE

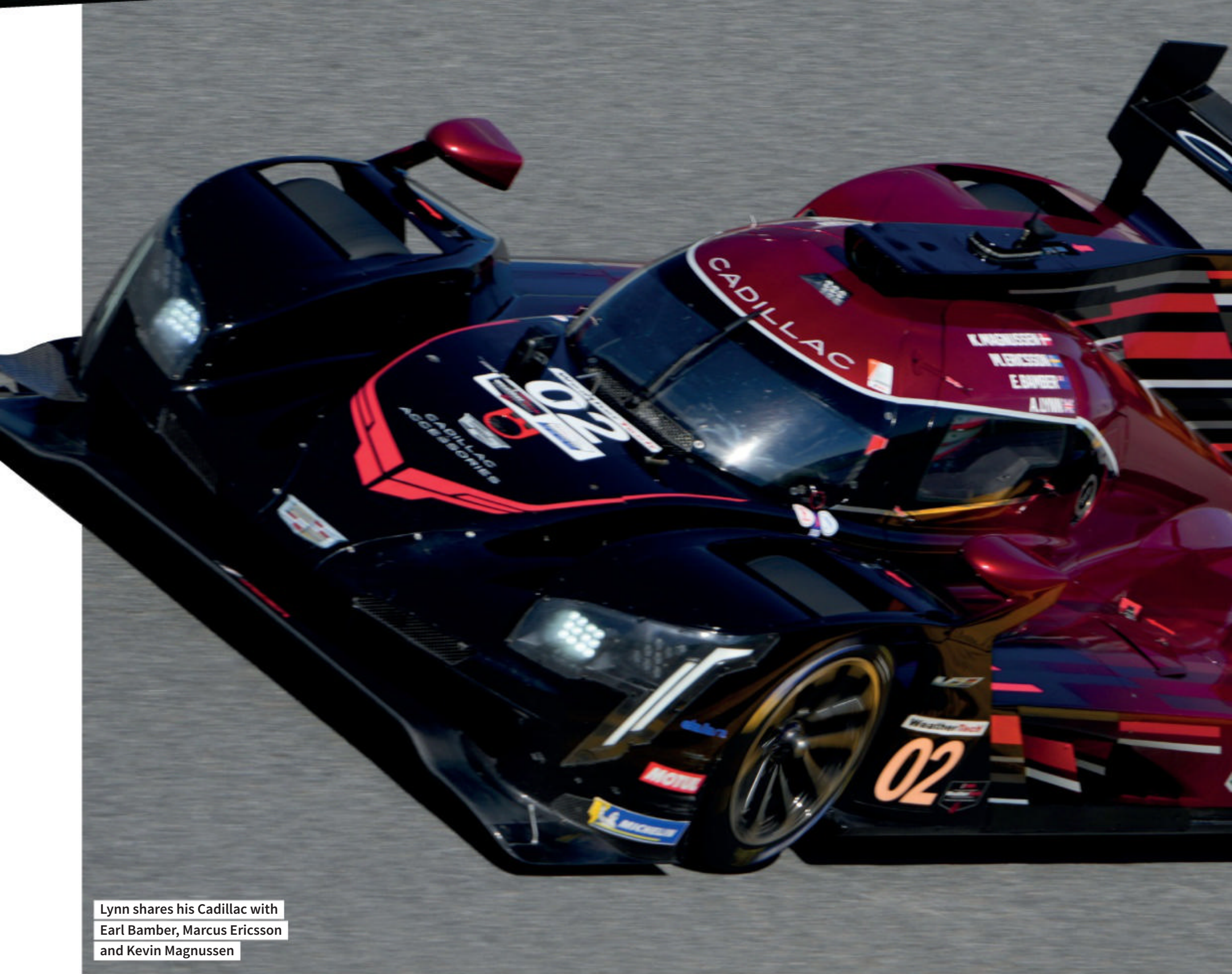
With the arrival of LMDh looming, top stars are flocking to IMSA for the last hurrah of the DPi cars, starting with this weekend's Daytona 24 Hours. Time to talk to the leading Brits

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
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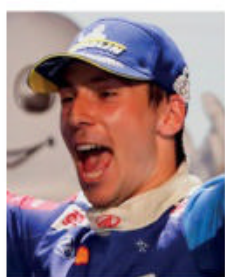


Lynn shares his Cadillac with
Earl Bamber, Marcus Ericsson
and Kevin Magnussen



DOLE

ALEX LYNN CASHING IN WITH CHIP



like to say, in the big enduros around the world.

“A while back, I sat down and thought, ‘What do I want to achieve in my career?’” says the Briton. “I realised what motivated me most was winning the big sportscar races overall. We’re heading into what we all think will be a great era for sportscar racing with LMDh and Le Mans Hypercar and so many manufacturers coming. I wanted to be part of that and grabbed an opportunity when it came along to be able to try to win races like Le Mans and Daytona. But I also want to win the 24-hour GT events at Spa and the Nurburgring.”

That ambition explains why he’s forged a relationship with a manufacturer in Cadillac committed to the bright new future of sportscar racing with an LMDh prototype that it intends to race in both IMSA and the World Endurance Championship from 2023. He kicks off a new stage of his career at the Daytona 24 Hours this weekend at the start of a full-season campaign with Chip Ganassi Racing.

The road to the position he’s now in started a year ago when he decided against remaining an Aston Martin factory driver after the marque axed its GTE Pro programme in the WEC. His participation in Formula E was a casualty of his move into prototypes in IMSA: he’d lost his Mahindra drive, but it wasn’t possible to pursue any of the offers he had to remain in the series because of date clashes with IMSA.

“I had the opportunity to join Ganassi and it was a very compelling one, because it offered the chance to make my dreams come true,” explains

Lynn, whose decision had been made before he scored a maiden FE win at the ExCeL in London last July. “The potential of the programme was important to me when I made my decision.”

That’s a reference to Cadillac’s commitment to both arenas in which an LMDh will be eligible. Perhaps also to the widely held belief that it will be Ganassi, already a class winner at Le Mans in GTE Pro with Ford, that will fly the flag for the General Motors marque in the WEC from next year.

Lynn, who is known to have signed a long-term deal with Ganassi, insists he doesn’t know where he’ll be racing come 2023. “My mind is very much in the present,” he says. That means his assault on the 2022 IMSA series alongside two-time Le Mans winner Earl Bamber in one of Ganassi’s expanded squad of Caddy DPi-V.R Daytona Prototype internationals. Kevin Magnussen and Marcus Ericsson complete the four-man squad for Daytona this weekend. “Having a team-mate like Earl is important because he’s an IMSA champion and knows what it takes to win in this style of racing,” says Lynn. “I think we can become a potent team.”

Ganassi missed out on victory at Daytona last year in a fierce battle with the Wayne Taylor Racing Acura squad, an operation that Lynn knows all about. He won the Sebring 12 Hours with the then-Cadillac-equipped team back in 2017 in the earliest days of his sportscar career. It remained his only IMSA start until last weekend’s grid-setting qualifying race at Daytona. Adding extra races to his WEC campaign with Aston in 2018-20 wasn’t an option because the programme was “so full on”.

Lynn knows that WTR, with Acura since last year, will be tough to beat: “They are a phenomenal team in terms of the level at which they execute. I didn’t really appreciate it at the time because my sportscar career was in its infancy, but when I look back you see the little things that make them the special team that they are. It’s the same with Ganassi. You come into a team like this and feel you are surrounded by winners. We know we’ve got a good car, so for sure we’re dreaming of coming home with the trophy.” >>



GALSTAD

RICHARD WESTBROOK WHY ‘WESTY’ LIKES TO GO WEST



Daytona may be Richard Westbrook’s race debut aboard a DPi, but he’s a seasoned hand in both the prototype and GT ranks in North America. He was part of the Ganassi Ford GTLM

campaigns in 2016-19, claiming 10 victories along the way, but before that he was a fixture in the prototype ranks from 2012 with Chevrolet, first in the Grand-Am series and then in IMSA after the merger with the ALMS.

A return to IMSA after an absence of two years was high up on Westbrook’s wish list for 2022, and he’s achieved his aim with the JDC-Miller Motorsports squad, winner at Sebring last year with its Cadillac.

“I’ve always loved racing in North America, and to be quite honest I missed it and all the great tracks like Road America, Watkins Glen and Mosport,” says Westbrook, who will contest the full season with team regular Tristan Vautier, with Loic Duval returning to the team for all four enduros and amateur Ben Keating

coming in for Daytona. “Having tested with the team at Road Atlanta in October, I understand that there’s a lot of talent there. They are a small team, but a very good team.”

Westbrook will be renewing a relationship with Rick Cameron, father of three-time IMSA champion and new Porsche driver Dane, at JDC-Miller. He engineered Westbrook during his time at the Spirit of Daytona squad over the first half of the 2010s. Westbrook has unfinished business from that time, more in terms of the IMSA title than Daytona.

The Spirit of Daytona Coyote-Corvette DP finished third at IMSA’s 24-hour opener in 2015, but Westbrook and team-mate Michael Valiante went into the season finale at Road Atlanta leading the standings, only to miss out on the title by three points. There were two more runner-up places in the GTLM classification with Ganassi. “I’m really focused on the championship, because I’ve come so close without nailing it,” he says. “I’ve got the watch from Daytona [the Rolex Cosmograph Daytona presented to the winners] with Ganassi and Ford, so I finally want to get the championship.”



Westbrook’s focus is on finally getting his hands on the IMSA crown

Jarvis wants to complete US enduro set; Blomqvist is a Daytona rookie





GALSTAD

OLIVER JARVIS DAYTONA IS THE ONLY WIN MISSING



When Oliver Jarvis learned early last year that Mazda wouldn't be continuing its DPi programme in 2022, his first aim was to ensure he maintained a foothold in the IMSA series. "That was my focus," he says.

"I've been here for four years with Mazda and it was particularly important to stay given the manufacturer commitments in North America. I wanted to position myself with a manufacturer and team that will be on the grid when LMDh arrives next year."

Jarvis has achieved that goal with Acura and Meyer Shank Racing, with which he will contest the full IMSA series alongside fellow Brit Tom Blomqvist at the wheel of its solo ARX-05 DPi. Helio Castroneves will join them for the four enduros that make up the Michelin-sponsored Endurance Cup sub-series, with Simon Pagenaud coming in as the fourth driver at Daytona.

"I looked around the paddock and saw what MSR had done," he says of a team that won Daytona back in 2012. "At the same time Mike [Shank, team boss] was very vocal about 2021 not going as he wanted. I'm very impressed with the progress made and I'm confident that the #60 MSR Acura is in much better shape this time around."

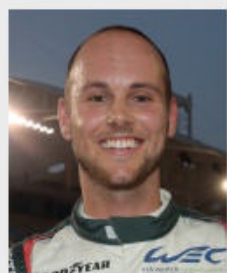
Jarvis is looking to complete the set of outright victories in the North American enduros at Daytona this weekend. He has won Petit Le Mans and Watkins Glen with Mazda, and before that

Sebring with Audi in the American Le Mans Series era in 2013. He was also a GT class winner with Audi at Daytona in 2013, but the overall has eluded him so far.

He ended up second with the Mazda DPi in 2020 and then third in 2021, though he was arguably closer to victory last year. "We had a better race – a perfect race – in 2020, but the #10 WTR Caddy was in a league of its own," he recalls. "Last year we came back onto the lead lap, but then had a problem with the rear wing that we'd actually had early on. For whatever reason it returned and made the car way too unstable on corner entry."

Jarvis isn't making predictions about Daytona this time around, except to say that Acura stablemate WTR "will be hard to beat as usual" and that "there isn't a DPi out there that can't win it". He does, however, reckon the complexion of the race will be different this year with a bumper field of 61 cars, the biggest since 2014. "It will be all about traffic management for 20 hours and staying on the lead lap," he says, "and then having a good car for those last two or three hours."

TOM BLOMQVIST BACK IN HIS COMFORT ZONE



Tom Blomqvist has joined the IMSA DPi field after an impressive maiden full season of prototype racing in the WEC last year with the Jota team. The former BMW factory driver was hot property after narrowly missing out on the LMP2 title and – by just seven

tenths of a second – a class win at Le Mans.

The drive with the MSR Acura team was exactly what he was looking for.

"I've kind of got myself back on track after it all ended with BMW," says Blomqvist, whose five-year stint with the German manufacturer included three years in the DTM, a part-season of FE and victory in the Spa 24 Hours. "I enjoyed my time there, but I have a formula-racing background and it's in a high-downforce car that I feel most comfortable as a racing driver. The goal after BMW was to get back to the best place for me, and that was prototypes."

An invitation to test with MSR at Road Atlanta in October was quickly followed by a deal to race alongside Jarvis. "They were impressed with me and I was impressed with them," explains Blomqvist, who had to turn his back on FE and the NIO team as a result. "It was the right thing to do because this is where I want to be."

Blomqvist is no stranger to IMSA, but he remains a Daytona rookie. He was meant to contest the full series back in 2019 with the Rahal BMW GTLM team, but ended up making a belated debut in round two at Sebring after encountering problems with his visa ahead of the 24 Hours. "I enjoyed my time in America with BMW," says Blomqvist. "IMSA is a great place to be: there are more races than in WEC and the style of racing is more intense."

Blomqvist believes he's landed in the right place at the right time. "Acura won the race last year with WTR, and our team has been working very hard to figure out its weaknesses and rectify them," he says. "The team is super-motivated with a new driver line-up. We're going there thinking we can win it." >>



MIKE CONWAY THIS IS THE TIME FOR ACTION



Mike Conway finally got the monkey off his back at the Le Mans 24 Hours last year with an overdue first victory. A driver who will be contesting all four of the IMSA enduros with the Action Express Racing

Cadillac squad reckons it's about time for a win in the Daytona enduro as well.

"I feel like every time I've been there we've been knocking on the door," says the two-time World Endurance champion, who has raced at Daytona

with Action Express every year since 2017, bar 2019 when a visa issue precluded his participation. "It just hasn't gone our way."

That includes a near-miss in 2018 when he and team-mates Felipe Nasr, Eric Curran and Stuart Middleton finished second to the sister entry from Action Express. Conway has won a lot of silverware in the big IMSA races – he's also been second in Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta on two occasions, and third twice at Sebring. "I love doing the four big ones and it's frustrating not to have won any of them," he says. "Daytona 2018 was the big one we missed out on, and coming so close motivates

me all the more to try to win it."

Conway is, of course, steeped in US racing culture. He was an IndyCar regular, racing in the series between 2009 and 2014, taking four wins. He knows this might be his last crack at Daytona for a while. Once the LMDh era arrives next year, the likelihood is that as a Toyota driver he won't be able to pitch up and drive for a marque that races against the Japanese brand in the WEC. Toyota has admitted interest in taking its LMH to Daytona, but there's no commitment so far. "I've been thinking about that for the last year," he says, "so I really want to make the most of this opportunity."

WILL STEVENS SPORTSCAR HEAVEN FROM MANOR



Will Stevens reckons he's arrived at WTR – winner of the past three Daytonas and four of the past five – at just the right time. His career in sportscars has been building up to an opportunity that brings him into the Acura

set-up for the four long-distance races.

"With everything that's happening in prototype racing with the rules coming together, it was important to get out there in IMSA to show what

I can do," says the four-time WEC LMP2 class winner, who teams up with full-season WTR drivers Ricky Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque plus Alexander Rossi this weekend. "I've just tried to keep my head down and get the results, but I always felt everything was heading in the right direction to get an opportunity like this. The time was right to position myself for the future. Driving for teams like WTR and Jota [with which he returns to the WEC in 2022] is exactly what I wanted for this year."

Daytona represents an IMSA debut for Stevens,

and he feels ready for the challenge. "I got to test the car at Daytona in December and had some laps in the dry and the wet, which was important," he says. "It was good to get the ball rolling before the Roar [the pre-event test last weekend that included the grid-setting qualifying race], but we've also been going through all the procedures that are different between America and Europe, things like how the safety cars work. WTR knows what it takes to win Daytona, and I feel in good shape to help them achieve some more success."



Tandy is relishing the prospect offered by the massive increase in GT numbers



THE NEW GTD PRO WAR CORVETTE WILL BE HANDY, SAYS **TANDY**

A new era dawns for GT racing in the IMSA series this weekend. The GT Le Mans class based on the GTE formula has been replaced by GT Daytona Pro for GT3 machinery, and the result is a massive increase in the grid. Six cars from four manufacturers squabbled over GTLM honours this time last year. Those numbers have risen to 13 from eight.

BMW, Porsche, Ferrari, Aston Martin, Mercedes, Lexus and Lamborghini are all represented with their GT3 staples, while Chevrolet joins them with a down-specced version of its GTE-rules Corvette C8.R.

So what's not to like, reckons Corvette Racing driver Nick Tandy.

"We've got loads of cars at Daytona again, which is awesome," says the Briton, who is sharing with Tommy Milner and Marco Sorensen in what is for the moment his only scheduled IMSA appearance. His main programme will be racing his Corvette in the WEC. "People have really come on board with the new rules. It's good for everyone because we all want to have a good race."

The Corvette will compete with anti-lock brakes, at a higher minimum weight, with less power and revised

aero to bring it into line with the GT3 cars. Tandy hadn't driven the definitive GTD Pro-spec Chevy prior to last weekend's Roar and grid-setting qualifying race, but he wasn't worried about

"PEOPLE HAVE REALLY COME ON BOARD WITH THE NEW RULES. IT'S GOOD FOR EVERYONE"

acclimatising to the car. "It's a Corvette after all," he says.

But he does reckon that the nature of the battle in the top GT class will change with the new rules. The Pro cars will race with the same

Balance of Performance as those in the regular GTD category for pro-am line-ups, which is also up in numbers for this year. The two sets of cars will also race on the same Michelin customer

tyres rather than the so-called 'confidentials' employed in GTLM.

"It's going to be a bit like the Spa 24 Hours where you have multiple classes but each car has the same

potential performance," he explains. "Spa can cause a lot of headaches because you might be racing for the lead in a Pro class car, but you come out of the pits with a full fuel load and you find yourself having to battle with a Pro-Am car with a good driver on board. It's going to cause a lot of tension."

Tandy is expecting all eight manufacturers to be in with a shot of victory. "IMSA know what they are doing on the BoP and I'm sure we will be competitive along with everybody else," he says. "And of course we have a chance: it's Corvette Racing going into a 24-hour race."

RACE CENTRE

MONTE CARLO RALLY • WORLD OF SPORT

Comeback king
Loeb kicked off the
WRC's hybrid era
with victory in his
M-Sport Puma



LOEB WINS BATTLE OF THE MONTE MOUNTAIN 'GOATS'

Two giants of the WRC, Sebastiens Loeb and Ogier, went head-to-head on the season-opener and delivered an epic fight to the finish

TOM HOWARD

The 90th edition of the storied Monte Carlo Rally will be remembered for generations. It welcomed a new, unpredictable Rally1 hybrid era, but it was a couple of semi-retired elder statesmen who stole the show, as World Rally Championship legends Sebastien Loeb and Sebastien Ogier starred in an enthralling battle for the ages.

Imagine Lewis Hamilton and Michael Schumacher going head-to-head almost at their peak. Well, this was rallying's equivalent. When it was announced that nine-time champion Loeb would be making a WRC comeback on the Monte with M-Sport Ford, it set tongues wagging, especially once newly crowned eight-time champion Ogier confirmed that the event would feature in his now scaled-down partial programme for Toyota.

Sadly, rally fans have witnessed only fleeting tussles between Loeb and Ogier, the most notable in 2011 when they were Citroen team-mates, and the young pretender Ogier attempted to upstage the man they call *Le Maestro*. There have been other occasions when they have crossed swords, but all of these previous skirmishes were eclipsed by what played out last weekend.

With Loeb and Ogier sharing 17 world titles and 15 Monte Carlo wins, the potential for fireworks was there if they were equipped with competitive new machines. But there were question marks surrounding Loeb. Could he still be competitive at the age of 47? Would Monte Carlo be a bridge too far after 12 days tackling the Dakar Rally, where he finished runner-up? Loeb answered those questions resoundingly after emerging from a four-day, 17-stage fight with an eighth Monte win, helped by late drama for Ogier, who seemed on course to topple his rival until the penultimate stage.

The new Rally1 regulations made it virtually impossible to predict a result heading into the event. All the pre-event discussion centred on the myriad rule changes and unknowns facing Toyota, Hyundai and M-Sport, which had all been burning the midnight oil to prepare all-new, hybrid, 500bhp, safer-spaceframe-chassis beasts from the ground up. Making a call on who would be quickest and which drivers would adapt best was super-tough.

The unseasonably dry conditions made this year's rally a more traditional asphalt blast than a danger-at-every-turn, snow-and-ice affair. Shakedown provided a glimpse of the script that would play out across the four days as Ogier pipped Loeb. There was also hope that all three manufacturers would be set for a close battle. But there were warning signs as to what was to come, too: Hyundai's Ott Tanak and Toyota duo Kalle Rovanner and Takamoto Katsuta had already suffered mechanical issues.

To add to the tough challenge that Monte presents with unproven cars, the rally began with two stages in darkness on Thursday night featuring the famed Col de Turini section. Any thoughts that the shakedown tussle between Ogier and Loeb was a flash in the pan were quickly vanquished.



“IT WAS SCARY AS IT WENT ON THE WHOLE DAY AND AT ONE POINT I WAS DIZZY AND HAD PAIN IN MY CHEST”

Ogier christened the new hybrid era by winning both stages, with Loeb his nearest rival, to open up a 6.7-second lead heading into Friday, with Toyota's Elfyn Evans 11.2s behind in third. The opening salvos of the new hybrid cars provided a brief glimpse into the pecking order, and it was clear that Toyota and M-Sport had done their homework with the GR Yaris and Puma respectively.

Hyundai, the last of the manufacturers to commit to the new rules, was clearly some way adrift of the pace, suffering engine, hybrid, hydraulics and balance issues with its i20 N. “I had no trust in the car, so I had to keep it neat and tidy,” said Thierry Neuville, who was 28.5s back in sixth overall.

Tanak offered a much clearer picture: “From the start we had some engine issues and on this one we lost some hydraulics. Anyway, it's a big list. At least we are here.”

In the third Hyundai entry, Oliver Solberg simply couldn't hear co-driver Elliott Edmondson. “It's too loud from everything else,” said Solberg. “It's very annoying and I couldn't hear him in many places – I had to brake and go again so I lost the rhythm.”

In the M-Sport camp, the mood was chipper, highlighted by the bubbly Craig Breen, who gushed about his new Puma. The point was further proven by the pace of team-mates Adrien Fourmaux and Gus Greensmith, who held fourth and fifth positions. “Everybody that's been involved in this – you've done an amazing job,” said Breen after ending the day seventh, having opted for a measured approach to the stages.

It wasn't all plain sailing at Toyota. Ogier and Evans were on the pace, but Rovanner ended Thursday more than a minute behind, unable to adapt to driving with the hybrid power and



Ogier looked to have the rally in the bag – then he got a puncture

without an active differential, which contributed to a spin on the opening stage. “I think the balance of the car is really tricky for me to drive,” said Rovanner. “I tried to do my best to adapt, but if the balance is a bit more to the understeering side then it’s quite difficult for me.”

Friday featured the old Monte master Loeb rolling back the years alongside his new co-driver Isabelle Galmiche, a part-time maths teacher, who was thrown into the deep end to make her WRC debut, aged 50. The M-Sport Ford pair won four of six stages to overhaul overnight leader Ogier. In doing so Loeb became the oldest driver in WRC history to lead a rally.

Loeb had rattled off two stage wins before taking the lead on stage five, where Ogier, cautious over patches of back ice, dropped 15.8s to Loeb. “It’s tricky and there is a lot of frost and a bit of black ice,” said Ogier. “The road will get faster now. Quite a difficult loop for us, but we will try again this afternoon.”

Without a midday service as per the Monte Carlo format, teams faced a huge challenge to fix teething issues with their cars. This was a particular problem for Hyundai as its woes continued. A clearly aggravated Neuville stated: “It’s a nightmare. I have never been so scared while driving.”

Tanak’s car was working better, but Solberg had an all-new problem, exhaust fumes coming into the cockpit and causing him to lose focus. “It was quite scary as it went on the whole day and at one point I was dizzy and had some pain in my chest,” he said.

M-Sport’s impressive start soon hit a bump in the road, in this case a mountainside, when Fourmaux misjudged a left-hander on stage three. It resulted in his Puma ploughing into a rock face. The impact flipped the car over the barriers and deep into a ravine. Incredibly, Fourmaux and co-driver Alexandre Coria emerged unscathed, kept safe by the new tougher steel chassis, but their rally was over. “It’s not what we wanted as we talked about making sure we get to the end,” said M-Sport team principal Richard Millener. “It’s another hard lesson in the development cycle; there’s not much we can do.” >>

OLD STAGER’S STILL GOT IT



If Sebastien Loeb declares that an event is “unbelievable” and one of his “best memories”, you know it has to be special, given his glittering 23-year career headlined by nine World Rally Championship titles. And his Monte Carlo Rally victory over Sebastien Ogier was just that, he reflected on Sunday.

At 47, the championship’s most successful driver even had doubts over his speed, but ended the four-day slog proud to still be able to fight with the best on his favourite event.

“It was unbelievable for me,” said Loeb. “It was a great rally. I was happy to be in the rhythm again as I really didn’t know what to expect when I came here. The feeling with the car was really good and it was very nice to drive.”

“We had a big fight with Seb all the weekend. I was fast on Friday, he was incredibly fast on Saturday, especially in Sisteron, and then today what happened, happened – and we won the rally. It was just an amazing moment for us.”

“It is 10 years since my last championship so I’m really proud that I’m still able to fight with the young guys and to be able to win a rally. For sure it is one of best memories.”

It was also a historic moment for co-driver and WRC debutante Isabelle Galmiche, who became the first woman to stand on the top step of a WRC podium since Fabrizia Pons in 1997.

“I think it is fantastic what has happened to me today, first time with Seb in a rally in Monte Carlo in the WRC,” she enthused. “I’m so happy, it is incredible what has happened. I think perhaps it might be the best day of my life.”

“IT’S 10 YEARS SINCE MY LAST CHAMPIONSHIP SO I’M PROUD I’M ABLE TO FIGHT WITH THE YOUNG GUYS”

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Breen was buzzing
about new Puma that
took him to third place...

In the battle for the lead, Ogier launched a fightback in the afternoon to cut a 15.9s deficit to Loeb to 9.9s by winning Friday's final stage. This arrived after Greensmith, who had been threatening the top stage times, pulled out arguably the drive of his life to beat Loeb and Ogier to win stage seven, a career-first fastest WRC stage time. "Someone said to me I'm the first non-French person to win a stage this year, so that's a good little accolade," grinned a jubilant Greensmith.

Loeb was surprised to be leading the rally, and the duel with Ogier went up another notch heading into Saturday. "I didn't expect that [to be leading]," Loeb offered. "For sure I was hoping for a good rhythm with this car and I had a good feeling in the test, but I didn't know what speed I would have."

Ogier reckoned: "It is really clear that the Ford is faster. I'm not giving up, I will try my best to put pressure on."

Hyundai managed to improve the performance of its "scary" i20 Ns throughout the day, ending Friday with Neuville fourth and Tanak fifth, but it was clear that there was plenty of work to do, including finding a fix to stop the fumes entering Solberg's cockpit.



...while M-Sport team-
mate Greensmith scored
maiden fastest stage time



“IT IS REALLY CLEAR THAT THE FORD IS FASTER. I’M NOT GIVING UP, I WILL TRY MY BEST TO PUT PRESSURE ON”

If Friday belonged to Loeb, Saturday was won by Ogier as the Toyota driver continued to take time from his rival. By stage 10, incredibly the pair were level-pegging on the exact same overall rally time. Loeb admitted he’d made the wrong tyre choice as the extra power of the hybrid beasts had taken life out of the supersofts.

The lead changed hands on stage 11, the infamous Sisteron test, which provided the biggest challenge to the crews courtesy of a three-mile section covered in treacherous snow and ice. Ogier made the best of his mix of slick and winter tyres to take the rally lead, but there was plenty of drama behind.

Third-placed Evans saw his podium hopes evaporate due to a “clumsy error”, ironically on the dry asphalt. The Welshman misjudged a right-hander and clipped a bank that sent his GR Yaris into a spin, coming to rest beached precariously on a steep hillside. It prompted officials to red-flag the stage, allowing fans to push the car back onto the road.

Behind, Neuville was only able to drive at 75% due to an issue with a front-right damper, which would eventually break in the afternoon, reducing the Belgian to a crawl and the need for a roadside cable-tie repair.

Prior to stage 11, Tanak had already suffered a left-rear puncture, and a decision to run slick tyres and carry one spare was to bite the Estonian. The 2019 champion slid on ice into a rock face, damaging the front end of his car, while also picking up a front-right puncture, resulting in retirement.

Solberg continued to battle through, but was 35 minutes adrift when the fume inhalation resulted in him losing concentration and running off the road on the morning’s first stage. Things were not going well for Hyundai... >>

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GRACIOUS IN DEFEAT



Sebastien Ogier could easily have bemoaned the misfortune that denied him victory in Monte Carlo, but simply chose to take joy and pride in being part of one of the World Rally Championship's greatest ever duels.

Ogier was hugely magnanimous in defeat to Sebastien Loeb and, like the hordes of fans watching on, even he had to marvel at what had unfolded. "What a fight and what a joy it was to make this rally one we will remember forever and one very special for me," said Ogier. "OK, this weekend we have not come out as the winner, but I think we can definitely keep our head up and keep smiling because we have done the job and fate decided differently today."

"I'm still smiling and still enjoy this fight very much, so I have to say well done to Seb [Loeb] and [co-driver] Isabelle [Galmiche], it has been a pleasure to fight with them."

Reflecting on his jumped-start penalty on the final stage, Ogier admitted: "Obviously they are the rules and if I moved before then I moved before."

But maybe it is better I got the penalty because if I would have been 0.5s behind it would probably be harder to take.

"We gave everything we had right to the end. On the last start the engine started to sound differently like I was losing power on the line and I just moved the clutch a little bit and it moved the car a little bit. I think I really started with speed at the correct time but I moved before and that is the rules."

**"WHAT A FIGHT
AND WHAT A
JOY TO MAKE
THIS RALLY
ONE WE WILL
REMEMBER
FOREVER"**



At the front, Ogier and Loeb were playing tyre games, trying to outpsyche each other for the repeat of Sisteron to end the day. Ogier saw that Loeb had fitted slicks, and copied his rival. The result led to Ogier gaining 16.1s since Loeb was unable to match the reigning champion. But the afternoon in terms of stage times belonged to Rovannerpa, who claimed two wins, now happy with the balance in his Yaris and thriving. His team-mate Katsuta not so much – he found the same rock face as Tanak.

Heading into Sunday's final four stages, the rally appeared to be in Ogier's hands. He was armed with a 21.1s lead over Loeb, but he wasn't taking anything for granted. "With the guy behind me, definitely we cannot relax, but also with the conditions, so altogether I know it is still tricky," said Ogier. "It has been very enjoyable to fight with him for the last three days and I hope we can fight like this to the end."

Loeb knew he was facing a tall order: "It is tough, it [the gap] is probably a bit too big but you never know, it is not finished before the end."

**"WITH THE GUY BEHIND, DEFINITELY
WE CANNOT RELAX, BUT ALSO WITH
THE CONDITIONS IT IS STILL TRICKY"**

Third was now in the hands of Breen, who benefited from clean driving and the trouble that befell his rivals. This included team-mate Greensmith, who suffered a puncture and an engine misfire that dropped him to fifth, behind the rejuvenated Rovannerpa.

Sunday provided drama of the highest order, and Loeb's words were perhaps a premonition. Ogier appeared on course to take a ninth Monte Carlo win after emerging from the first two stages with a 24.6s lead. But there was one last twist to this Monte epic. Ogier picked up a front-left puncture, his lead evaporated and transformed into a 9.5s deficit with one stage remaining. Advantage Loeb.

A final-stage showdown awaited. Ogier threw everything at it – ultimately too much because a jumped start earned him a 10s penalty. Without that, he would have taken nine seconds out of Loeb with a drive he said was "over the limit" at times.

Either way, it was not enough. Loeb and Galmiche held on to take a truly memorable win, the 80th of *Le Maestro's* distinguished WRC career and a first for Galmiche. Had Ogier avoided the penalty, he would have lost the rally by just 0.5s.

A first win for M-Sport since 2018 was capped off by Breen – the first of the runners competing the full season – in a fine third, and Greensmith in fifth, behind Rovannerpa after the Finn's impressive turnaround. Neuville dragged his i20 N to sixth with a stage win to give Hyundai some joy from a woeful weekend that ended with the team retiring Solberg and Edmondson after the pair felt unwell due to the fumes they had inhaled for two days.

And Evans didn't leave empty handed after claiming four points on the Power Stage.

There is a school of thought that the Monte Carlo Rally being dominated by two semi-retired drivers is perhaps not the best look for the WRC. But it's important to remember that the Monte is a specialist event, and a quick glance at the history books now has 16 victories shared between Loeb and Ogier.

It was always going to be a tall order for the current crop to find the necessary speed advantage over the experience and local knowledge of Ogier and Loeb, and with unfamiliar cars where reliability, particularly in Hyundai's case, was a massive concern.

For the WRC, the 'Great Monte GOAT-off' thrust the championship back into the spotlight while answering critics who had questioned whether the new Rally1 regulations would produce spectacular cars and action. Sometimes you just have to marvel at seeing two of the greatest put on such a show. 🏆



Neuville had a torrid time in new Hyundai, but salvaged sixth place

Leaking fumes caused an off, and eventually forced Solberg out

Evans ran as high as second, then came a cropper on dry asphalt

RESULTS ROUND 1/13, MONTE CARLO RALLY, 20-23 JANUARY

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER		TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Loeb	(FRA) Isabelle Galmiche	(FRA) M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	3h00m32.8s
2	Sebastien Ogier	(FRA) Benjamin Veillas	(FRA) Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+10.5s
3	Craig Breen	(IRL) Paul Nagle	(IRL) M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+1m39.8s
4	Kalle Rovanperä	(FIN) Jonne Halttunen	(FIN) Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+2m16.2s
5	Gus Greensmith	(GBR) Jonas Andersson	(SWE) M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	+6m33.4s
6	Thierry Neuville	(BEL) Martijn Wydaeghe	(BEL) Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+7m42.6s
7	Andreas Mikkelsen	(NOR) Torstein Eriksen	(NOR) Toksport WRT / Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+11m33.8s
8	Takamoto Katsuta	(JPN) Aaron Johnston	(GBR) Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+12m24.7s
9	Erik Cais	(CZE) Petr Tesinsky	(CZE) Yacco ACCR Team / Ford Fiesta Rally2	+12m29.2s
10	Nikolay Gryazin	(RUS) Konstantin Aleksandrov	(RUS) Toksport WRT 2 / Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+13m41.3s

OTHERS

21	Elfyn Evans	(GBR) Scott Martin	(GBR) Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+23m10.5s
R	Oliver Solberg	(SWE) Elliott Edmondson	(GBR) Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	SS14-fumes
R	Ott Tanak	(EST) Martin Jarveoja	(EST) Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	SS11-damage
R	Adrien Fourmaux	(FRA) Alexandre Coria	(FRA) M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Puma Rally1	SS3-accident

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Luceram - Lantosque (9.44 miles)	Ogier 10m34.0s	Ogier	Loeb +5.4s
SS2 La Bollene-Vesubie - Moulinet (14.45 miles)	Ogier 15m14.4s	Ogier	Loeb +6.7s
SS3 Roure - Beuil 1 (11.39 miles)	Loeb 10m08.9s	Ogier	Loeb +5.5s
SS4 Guillaume - Peone - Valberg 1 (8.38 miles)	Loeb 7m40.1s	Ogier	Loeb +2.8s
SS5 Val-de-Chalvagne - Entrevaux 1 (10.63 miles)	Loeb 10m56.8s	Loeb	Evans +10.6s
SS6 Roure - Beuil 2 (11.39 miles)	Loeb 9m57.2s	Loeb	Evans +14.5s
SS7 Guillaume - Peone - Valberg 2 (8.38 miles)	Greensmith 7m31.9s	Loeb	Ogier +14.4s
SS8 Val-de-Chalvagne - Entrevaux 2 (10.63 miles)	Ogier 10m31.6s	Loeb	Ogier +9.9s
SS9 Le Fugeret - Thorame-Haute (10.44 miles)	Evans 9m12.8s	Loeb	Ogier +6.5s
SS10 Saint-Jeannet - Malijai 1 (10.59 miles)	Ogier 9m26.4s	Ogier & Loeb	Evans (third) +9.3s
SS11 Saint-Geniez - Thoard 1 (12.92 miles)	Ogier 14m17.1s	Ogier	Loeb +5.4s
SS12 Saint-Jeannet - Malijai 2 (10.59 miles)	Rovanperä 9m23.8s	Ogier	Loeb +5.0s
SS13 Saint-Geniez - Thoard 2 (12.92 miles)	Rovanperä 14m14.6s	Ogier	Loeb +21.1s
SS14 La Penne - Collongues 1 (12.04 miles)	Loeb 11m27.9s	Ogier	Loeb +20.0s
SS15 Brianconnet - Entrevaux 1 (8.86 miles)	Neuville 8m50.4s	Ogier	Loeb +24.6s
SS16 La Penne - Collongues 2 (12.04 miles)	Loeb 11m21.0s	Loeb	Ogier +9.5s
SS17 Brianconnet - Entrevaux 2 (Power Stage) (8.86 miles)	Rovanperä 8m35.8s	Loeb	Ogier +10.5s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Loeb 27; 2 Ogier 19; 3 Rovanperä 17; 4 Breen 15; 5 Neuville 11; 6 Greensmith 10; 7 Mikkelsen 6; 8 Katsuta 4; 9 Evans 4; 10 Cais 2.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 M-Sport Ford WRT 42; 2 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 39; 3 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 13; 4 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG 8.



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Mini beats the imps from Red Bull stable

FORMULA REGIONAL ASIAN
YAS MARINA (ARE)
22-23 JANUARY
ROUND 1/5

An unconventional safety car restart at Yas Marina is nothing unusual in recent weeks, but this time it arguably prevented a Red Bull victory and allowed Sicilian talent Gabriele Mini into an early Formula Regional Asian Championship lead.

Mini had already had an eventful weekend. He'd prevailed in an entertaining tussle for second in the opening race with Arthur Leclerc and new Red Bull Junior recruit Isack Hadjar, and he'd followed that by shunting out of the second race in a clash with Ferrari protege Dino Beganovic. Mini had pole for the finale, but stalled at the start. He eventually got away, but was down in 16th when the red flags flew because of an enormous startline crash. Cem Bolukbasi was another to stall, and was collected by Amna Al Qubaisi and Salih Yoluc in a heavy impact, although all emerged without serious injury.

Mini was given a reprieve when the decision was made to restart behind the



safety car, because the order in which the field lined up was original grid positions rather than at the red flag. He made full use of that to guide his Hitech GP car to victory.

Red Bull pair Hadjar (Hitech) and Jak Crawford (Abu Dhabi Racing by Prema) had strong pace and were second and fourth respectively at the red flag behind initial leader Gabriel Bortoleto. Crawford was second from the restart, while Hadjar won his duel with Bortoleto (who faded to sixth), but neither was a match for Mini.

F4 graduate Sebastian Montoya did a

terrific job in his first race at this level to win the opener with the Prema-assisted Mumbai Falcons team, then proved a chip off the old block by simultaneously passing two cars around the outside of Turn 9 on his charge to fourth in the reversed-grid race. This was won by Bortoleto (3Y Technology by R-ace), although Hadjar threatened until a late technical drama. That allowed Lorenzo Fluxa into second and Leclerc up to third.

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Red Baron Ferrari fighter pilots take honours by a lap

ABU DHABI 6 HOURS
YAS MARINA (ARE)
22 JANUARY

Austrian Ferrari team Baron Motorsport took victory in the Abu Dhabi 6 Hours in convincing fashion. Danish sportscar gun Mikkel Mac joined locally based Zimbabwean Axcil Jefferies to lead the line-up in the Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo, which won by over a lap.

Early-2000s F3 Euro Series regular Philipp Baron was also at the wheel, along with Ernst Kirchmayr and Roman

Ziemian. For Jefferies, the success came just a week after playing his part in the WRT Audi Dubai 24 Hours triumph.

There was a battle for second place, with ex-Super Touring Honda hero Peter Kox joined by daughter Stephane and Nico Pronk in their Porsche 911 GT3-R to fight with the JR Motorsport BMW M6 GT3 of Ted van Vliet and Max Weering. This was decided in the final 15 minutes when the BMW passed the Porsche.

Serial Creventic winner Herberth Motorsport had another tough outing following the non-start for its most likely challenger in Dubai. This time, over two minutes' worth of penalties was enough to keep the Porsche of Alfred Renauer, Jurgen Haring and Markus Neuhofer down in fourth place.

In the TCE class, CWS Racing's pair of Ginettas could not beat the Les Deux Arbres Ligier JS2 R of ace duo Christophe Bouchut and Hugo Valente. Bobby Thompson flew early on in the G56 before the throttle cable was dislodged.



WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA REGIONAL ASIAN
YAS MARINA (ARE)
Race 1 Sebastian Montoya (Mumbai Falcons)
Race 2 Gabriel Bortoleto (3Y by R-ace GP)
Race 3 Gabriele Mini (Hitech GP)

ABU DHABI 6 HOURS
YAS MARINA (ARE)
Mikkel Mac/Axcil Jefferies/Philipp Baron/
Ernst Kirchmayr/Roman Ziemian
Baron Motorsport (Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo)



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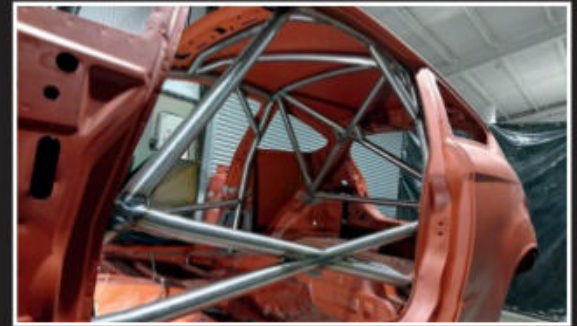


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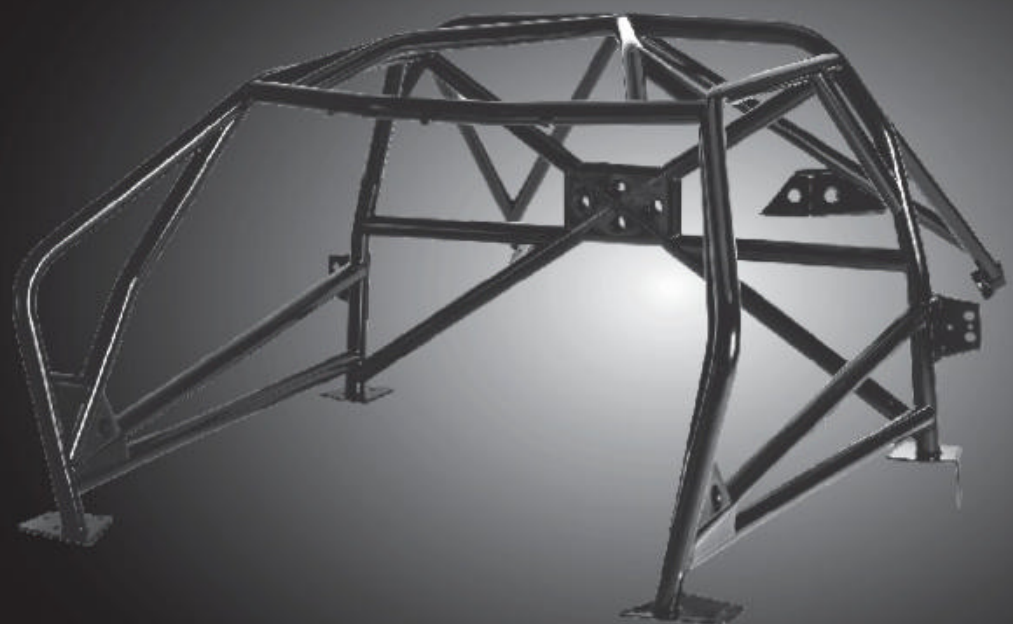
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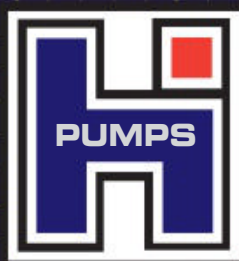


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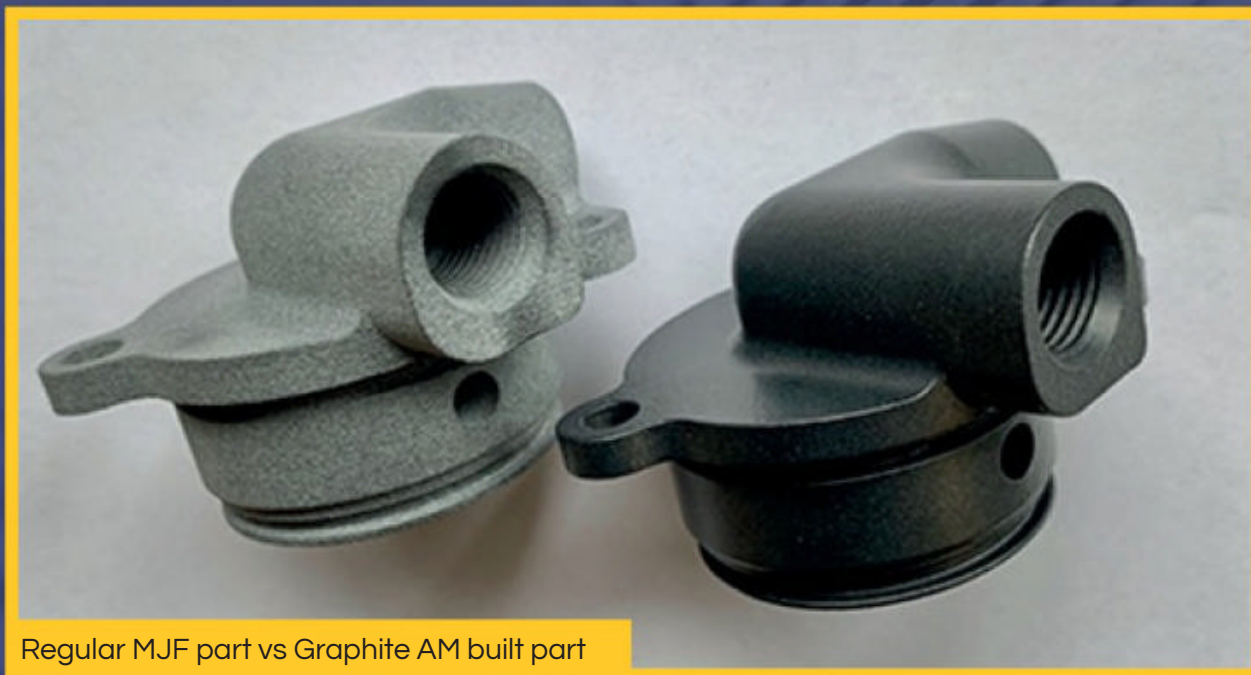
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Porsche's search for its next star

How the 2022-23 Porsche GB Junior was chosen



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BTCC ACES TO
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Cleland will be back in his Vauxhall Vectra, while Reid will drive a Nissan Primera

JONES

GRIFFITHS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

BTCC GREATS TO RACE IN NEW SUPER TOURERS SERIES

SUPER TOURERS

Four-time British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington is set to join former BTCC stars John Cleland and Anthony Reid in the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's new Super Tourers series.

The fledgling category is open to machinery from the popular era of the BTCC as well as more recent BTC-T and S2000-spec cars. While Cleland and Reid will be competing in the exact cars they raced during the Super Touring days, Turkington will be back behind the wheel of an MG ZS (the model in which he made his BTCC debut) owned by Jason Hughes for the Silverstone season opener at the end of March.

"I've known Jason since back in the days when he raced in the BTCC in the MG, and obviously I know the car," said Turkington. "He asked if I'd like to do a race, and it's a few weeks before we start the BTCC season and I thought, 'Why not?'"

"I'm excited to drive the MG again after 18 years. It'll be interesting to step back into my first BTCC car, and more than anything I'm looking forward to it because it'll probably be my first race of the year, and one without too much pressure."

Cleland will be racing the Vauxhall Vectra he campaigned during the 1997 BTCC season, and which he has driven in

the defunct Historic Sports Car Club Super Touring Challenge. He is due to compete in three of the four Super Tourers rounds, his first races since before the coronavirus pandemic.

"That's the first two years since I got my driving licence that I haven't sat in a racing car," admitted Cleland. "We rebuilt the engine 18 months ago but we couldn't even take it to run it in."

"I think the idea of having four races, well spread out, at good tracks, is great. These cars were the dog's knackers – very seldom did they not want to bite you! My car is still in proper Vauxhall colours and it would be great to see a collection of these cars [racing]. They are about."

Reid, meanwhile, will be reunited with his 1998 Nissan Primera, a car he hasn't driven since finishing runner-up in the BTCC that year. It is one of two Primers that will be run by Brisky Racing, the other being piloted by owner Richard Wheeler.

"That 1998 car that I drove was my favourite in British Touring Cars because, over a period of three years, we had developed that car – Nissan Motorsport Europe and myself and David Leslie," said Reid. "That car had my DNA in it. I'm very much looking forward to being reunited with the car and the plan is to go testing in February."

STEPHEN LICKORISH & MARCUS SIMMONS

IN THE HEADLINES

WHITE IN GT4 SUPERCUP

Ginetta GT4 Supercup veteran Colin White will continue in the series this year, the inaugural season with the new G56. White, who took his fourth class crown in 2021, will be back with his CWS Motorsport squad. He first sampled the G56 during last season's British GT finale at Donington Park.

GREYSTONE'S GT CUP PAIR

Michael Broadhurst and Phillip Carter will contest a full GT Cup season in a McLaren 570S GT4 with the Greystone GT squad this year, after making a one-off appearance together at Donington Park in 2021. Racing rookie Carter and GT regular Broadhurst become the second driver pairing confirmed for the team this season.

PEARCE AND SARGEANT BACK

Mini Challenge Trophy race winner Lee Pearce will remain in the category for a third season this year. He claimed his maiden series win during 2021 on his way to 14th in the table. Another racer continuing will be Jonny Sargeant, who stays with Excelr8 after making his competition debut with the team last year.

MINI 7 MARSHAL FUNDRAISER

The Mini 7 Racing Club held its annual awards ceremony last weekend, during which British Motorsports Marshals Club chair Nadine Lewis (below left) was presented with a cheque for £1500 that had been raised by the Mini drivers. On the slowing-down lap after races at the Mini Festival at Brands Hatch in August, competitors waved specially made orange flags in support of the marshals' club following the death of volunteer Rob Foote at the track weeks before. Donations towards the club were collected during the event.



TANNER



Pearson back on track after cancer treatment

BRITISH F4

Ginetta Junior podium finisher Joel Pearson got back behind the wheel of a British Formula 4 car last week for the first time since his cancer diagnosis and is now targeting a full-time return to racing this year.

Pearson, who was eighth in the 2020 Ginetta Junior standings, had agreed a deal to drive for Argenti Motorsport in British F4 last season before those plans had to be put on hold when it was discovered that he had bone cancer in

his pelvic area.

This was later found to be a particularly rare form of the disease, meaning Pearson needed additional specialist treatment. The 17-year-old says this has been “going to plan” and he is “feeling very well and feeling ready to get back”.

Pearson linked up with Argenti at Donington Park last week for his first test in the F4 car in over a year, and was delighted to get back behind the wheel again.

“It felt amazing – as soon as I got on track and warmed up,

everything clicked and it gave me a massive buzz!” he said. “After a year out and with it being my first proper day on slick tyres the pace was actually very good. Throughout the treatment, I’ve been going on the simulator and that speed never went.”

The target of returning to competition has helped him through his treatment and he is working on putting together a race programme for this year. “The aim is to get back out in F4 and get back racing this year – I’m determined to get back

out,” he added. “To get back on the podium again would be a dream come true.”

Pearson also thanked the motorsport world for the support he has received over the past year, including a video message from Mercedes Formula 1 boss Toto Wolff.

“The motorsport community has helped me out so much,” he said. “The support and kind messages from other drivers, drivers’ families, teams and fans has been overwhelming. It helps me get through it.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Brits shine in UAE F4 series as Antonelli dominates

UAE F4

Three British drivers stood on the podium at last weekend’s opening round of the UAE Formula 4 Championship. After Aiden Neate lost out on his first car racing victory by just 0.003 seconds, Taylor Barnard scored a reversed-grid win and Oliver Gray claimed a rostrum.

Neate qualified on the front row for the opening race, and took the lead when poleman and 2021 British F4 rival Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak stalled at the start. A lengthy safety car period left just three laps of racing at the end where Neate came under pressure from Mercedes F1 junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli, and the Italian pulled off



Antonelli leads Wharton and Brit Neate (left)

a pass around the outside into the Turns 6/7 chicane just before the finish line, which was on the alternative support race pit straight.

Antonelli’s tighter line allowed Neate and Australian Ferrari protege James Wharton to draft him to the flag, the all-Prema Racing trio covered by just 0.108s.

Gray led the second race in his Hitech GP car, before Antonelli – from fifth on the grid – took the lead on the third lap. Neate also got past his fellow Brit to

finish second again. Antonelli appeared to have won the third race from Neate, but penalties for crossing the pit-exit line elevated MP Motorsport driver Inthraphuvasak to victory, after he’d moved up to third following Wharton’s retirement with a mechanical problem.

PHM Racing-run Nico Rosberg protege Barnard stormed from fifth on the reversed grid to lead the finale at the end of lap one. The superb Antonelli made his way from 12th to second and leads the points.

IN THE HEADLINES

CSCC STORY CORRECTION

Autosport wishes to clarify incorrect statements in a story last week (20 January) about the Sports Racing and V8s series. It was reported that the category would team up with the Classic Sports Car Club's Special Saloons and Modsports Series at a number of events this year, which is not the case. While Sports Racing and V8s drivers with cars that are already eligible for the CSCC series are welcome to compete in its races, only at the October Silverstone event will there be a dedicated class for Sports Racing and V8s competitors. Autosport apologises for the error.

PEARSON TO VIRTUOSI

FIA Formula 2 frontrunner Virtuosi has recruited Ginetta Junior graduate Edward Pearson as its first driver for its expansion into British F4 this season. Pearson was 17th in last year's Ginetta table, taking one podium in his first season of racing in cars. The series introduces the new Tatuus-Abarth car for 2022.

NEW CLASSIC F3 SERIES

The Historic Sports Car Club and leading French promoter HVM Racing have created a four-round challenge called the F3 Classic Interseries, which will be open to pre-1985 two-litre F3 cars from across Europe. The events included are the Historic Tour de Dijon and the Grand Prix de France Historique at Paul Ricard from HVM Racing, and the Brands Hatch Super Prix and Silverstone Classic from the HSCC.

GADD COMMITS TO F1000

Tom Gadd will continue in the 750 Motor Club's F1000 Championship this season with Team Sellars Racing. Gadd, 24 (below), took three wins and finished eighth in the 2021 standings. The 2019 Locost champion said: "A few engine blow-ups and COVID meant we missed some races last year, but this time the plan is for a full season."



GBR has run Hannah before, including at Walter Hayes Trophy



Hannah moves into GB4 with Graham Brunton Racing

GB4

Logan Hannah has become the first driver to join the new-for-2022 GB4 Championship and will compete with Graham Brunton Racing.

The Scot has previously raced in Formula Ford machinery with GBR, in particular the National and Scottish series over the past few seasons, and makes the move to slicks and wings four years after a one-off UAE F4 outing.

"I'm so looking forward to this coming season," she said. "Having competed in the UK National and Scottish Formula Ford 1600 championships for three seasons, I feel that I am ready to move up to the more sophisticated formula."

"GB4 is an exciting new championship that will progress aspiring drivers forwards in single-seater racing and, with Laser Tools Racing's support, I'm very proud to be involved at this early stage."

Team manager Craig Brunton added: "This is a great stepping stone for Logan and one we feel is well deserved. She has the benefit of having already driven the same kind of chassis in UAE F4 but she actually doesn't have that much track time in these cars. It'll be a learning year for her, with the full support of the GBR team."

Thirteen teams have confirmed an interest in taking part in GB4, which uses the Tatuus F4-T014 chassis and begins at Snetterton on 2-3 April.

STEFAN MACKLEY & STEPHEN BRUNSDON



Faria and Sagrera join Carlin in GB3

GB3

Carlin has completed its 2022 GB3 Championship line-up after snapping up Roberto Faria and Javier Sagrera to partner Callum Voisin this season.

Eighteen-year-old Brazilian Faria competed full-time last season in GB3 with Fortec, after contesting several 2020 rounds. He finished fifth in the standings, with one victory in the reversed-grid race at Spa and a further eight podiums.

Spaniard Sagrera, also 18, was

another ever-present in 2021, when he placed 10th in the standings with Elite Motorsport, with one podium.

The GB3 Championship, which begins at Oulton Park on 16-18 April, will introduce a new model of car this year, which will produce more downforce and power than its predecessor.

Team boss Trevor Carlin said: "I'm delighted to welcome Roberto and Javier to the team. Together with Callum, we have a really strong line-up this

season and I'm excited to see what they can do."

"The new car makes everything a level playing field again, so there will be a lot of hard work ahead, but I feel we have three drivers capable of winning, which is a fantastic position to be as a team."

The 16-year-old Voisin makes the jump into single-seaters this term after finishing sixth – with seven race wins – in his debut season of Ginetta Junior last year.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Woodman Trophy to begin new Gp1 series

GROUP 1 TOURING CARS

A race for Group 1 touring cars of the British Saloon Car Championship's pre-1983 epoch at September's Castle Combe Autumn Classic will preview a planned four-to-five race invitation series for the charismatic crowd-pleasers from 2023, and cement an ongoing bond between promoter Automobiles Historiques and the Castle Combe Racing Club.

The 45-minute pitstop intro, for the Vince Woodman Trophy, will celebrate the local hero who died last June. The dynamic Bristolian Ford dealer won 12 BSCC races in the era driving Equipe Esso Capris, and 27 at Combe between 1965 and 2008.

Automobile Historiques' Flavien Marcais, who runs the

GT & Sports Car Cup series for pre-'66 machines with wife Vanessa, said: "The Gerry Marshall Trophy [Group 1] events at Goodwood always produce spectacular racing. Its following is growing [two grids last year, more cars being built], but many want to compete more often, in a dedicated field, on Dunlop Post-Historic tyres and a level playing field. That's what we are offering."

Lindsey Warren has joined as series coordinator and brings vast experience to the role, having started with Le Mans Legends in 2000. "My first race meeting was at Brands Hatch in the '70s, and seeing Capris go wheel-to-wheel with Dollys [Triumph Dolomite Sprints] still fills my heart with joy," said Warren.



"Group 1 was such a lovely era, but the current car owners may not want to compete alongside slick-shod Sierra RS500s. Our races will put them in the spotlight, and are a natural fit with the GTSCC."

Four classes will be run for cars from 1966-82: up to 1600cc, 1601-2500cc, 2501-4000cc and over 4000cc.

Group 1 Touring Cars and

GTSCC will henceforth be registered by CCRC with Motorsport UK, alongside Castle Combe's resident championships and series. "We're changing it up a bit this year, opening the door to different ideas, but both fit our ethos to build the club," said CCRC competition secretary Steve Weston.

MARCUS PYE

John Lancaster 1937-2022

OBITUARY

John Lancaster, who died last week aged 84, lived an interesting and full life. Apprenticed to the hallowed Royal Aircraft Establishment, he forged an impressive career in aeronautical and production engineering, ultimately with British Aerospace and the MoD.

He started racing in 1958, in a very tidy Austin 7 Special in 750 Formula, and was the 750 Motor Club's final 1172 Formula champion in 1966. Driving his self-built ORVA 3 (AVRO backwards,

mirroring the Lancaster bomber), an innovative spaceframe chassis with stressed aluminium sideskins, he beat 1964 title winner Brian Small by a point.

Lancaster and his brother Reg, a gifted machinist, went on to contest the Monoposto championship, driving JCM cars designed by John's RAE chum John Clarke, who penned F2 cars for March, Frank Williams (the 1973 F1 ISO-Marlboros, later renamed FW01/FW02) and Brian Lewis's F2/Atlantic Boxers.

A Mono regular from 1972-81 with JCM 6, 6+ and 7, John Lancaster was



uncle/great-uncle and inspiration to Alan and Andy Lancaster — Reg's son and grandson — who currently compete in Classic FFord 2000 with a Pilbeam MP52.

MARCUS PYE

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Ginetta regular is stepping up to GT3 with a Continental

Meyrick leads Assetto jump to GT3 with Bentley

BRITISH GT

Assetto Motorsport will step up to the GT3 class of the British GT Championship this year with a Bentley Continental for Andy Meyrick and team regular Mark Sansom.

The squad run by Simon Traves and Jim Edwards Jr has predominantly raced Ginettas, winning back-to-back G40 Cup titles in 2018 and 2019. It stepped into British GT's GT4 class last season, with Ginetta factory driver Charlie Robertson joining Sansom. The pair almost won on the G56 GT4's competition debut at Brands Hatch, but were denied by a late puncture.

Sansom, who finished third in the GT4 Pro-Am standings last year, is making the step up to GT3 alongside Meyrick, who raced as a Bentley factory driver in the Blancpain GT Series in 2014 and 2015, and



has experience of the second-generation Continental with Team Parker in the 2019 Spa 24 Hours and 2021 Gulf 12 Hours.

The 36-year-old director of the BRDC SuperStars programme has raced sportscars internationally since 2009, including spells in LMP1 in Audi, Aston Martin and DeltaWing machinery, but has never competed in British GT.

"I've wanted to race in it myself but haven't had the opportunity, so I'm really looking forward to getting out on track," said Meyrick, who finished fourth at the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours in an ORECA, the best non-Audi entry. "I am confident that my previous experience will give us the best chance of starting on the front foot."

Meanwhile, British GT race winners Marcus Clutton and Morgan Tillbrook will continue with their Enduro Motorsport McLaren 720S GT3 this year. GT3 newcomer Tillbrook improved considerably during his maiden campaign last season and, together with hard charger Clutton, won the Donington Park finale. The team has also acquired a second GT3 McLaren with the intent to run customers.

JAMES NEWBOLD

Mike Kimpton 1948-2022

OBITUARY

Mike Kimpton, who succumbed to COVID-19 on 20 January, aged 73, having survived cancer and pneumonia, was a tour de force in the motor trade's aftermarket accessories sector.

Apprenticed at 18 to Godfrey Davis in Welwyn, he soon established Kimpton Marketing Ltd, selling products to big players Halfords and Gordon Spice. He later bought Mountney Steering Wheels and also added roof-bar manufacturer Summit Accessories to the group.

Among 1977's Sports 2000 pioneers, Kimpton finished ninth in the points, besting at fourth in Brands Hatch's wet enduro in John Brown Wheels' second Lola T490. Switching to Tiga for 1980, he was third to James Weaver and Geoff Farmer at Donington Park's non-championship National Racing Festival.



Kimpton saddled a Ford Capri 3.0S in the 1981 British Saloon Car Championship, claiming a fifth at Brands, again in the wet. Kimpton, Adrian Hall and Robert Parker also finished 13th – second S2000 behind aces Ian Taylor and Richard Eyre – in the Brands Hatch 1000Km, Britain's world sportscar championship counter.

Outings in a Mazda RX-7 followed in 1982, and Kimpton contested FIA World Championship (Group C2) and

Thundersports thereafter, mainly in Tigas with Toyota, Hart, Ford BDT and Cosworth DFL engines. In 1988, partnered by American Lon Bender at Roy Baker Racing, the proud BRDC member landed a personal best 12th in Brno's 360km WSPC round.

Mike is survived by his wife Ann, son Dan (Mountney's MD), daughter Louise and their families, to whom Autosport offers condolences.

MARCUS PYE



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Pilot races to run for Historic Modsports

HSCC

The Historic Sports Car Club is planning to introduce a new Historic Modsports and Saloons series and will run two pilot events later this year ahead of a possible full campaign in 2023.

The category will cater for modified versions of road cars built before 1980 with an emphasis on entries being in the original specification they raced in period, in a bid to encourage cars back onto the circuit that have not been raced in years.

Eligible cars must have their original material bodies and be powered by the same engine that was used in the period road car they are based upon. No spaceframe or kit car replicas will be allowed and motorcycle engines will not be permitted.

Trial races for the concept are due to be held at Cadwell Park on 4-5 June and at Oulton Park on 5 August.

HSCC CEO Andy Dee-Crowne is keen to stress that the category is not a rival to the Classic Sports Car Club's popular Special Saloons and Modsports division and that this new series is instead targeted at much older cars.

"There's a very successful Modsports series with the CSCC but we were approached by a number of people that



Modsports versions of road cars built before 1980 will be allowed to race



said, 'We like it but it's not historic – would you consider running an historic Modsports championship?'" explained Dee-Crowne.

"We thought we've got Historic Touring Cars and Historic Road Sports and 70s Road Sports, but there's a number of 1960s/70s cars that can't race in those series but are bona fide Modsports cars from that era.

"We've asked about and we've got a lot of interest. It remains to be seen how that turns into bums on seats but we think it's got legs and fits with the HSCC."

Series prime-mover Steve Watton added: "There are many suitable period cars now sitting in garages with no purely historic series to race in. We want to recreate a very special time in national racing.

"Our ambition is a grid full of Minis, MG Midgets, Ford Anglias, Datsun 240Zs, Ford Escorts, Hillman Imps and low-volume sportscars like Ginetta G15s and Clan Crusaders, all with permitted period modifications."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

JEC puts a halt to Saloon and GT series

CTCRC

The Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club has decided to focus its sporting activities away from circuit racing and will no longer run its Saloon and GT Championship.

Its former competitors are now set to join the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's new Jaguar Challenge series.

The JEC, which began organising racing series and championships in 1998, has launched a new Tracksport initiative focused on non-competitive trackdays, hillclimbs, sprints and

navigational events.

Club director Richard West said: "We discussed it at board level and we said, 'It's been fantastic, but it involves such a small number of the JEC's membership that, really, should we be spending time on that or should we be looking for something more inclusive that all members can benefit from?'"

Having hosted the JEC championship last year, the CTCRC has introduced the Jaguar Challenge following an approach by drivers. Minor technical changes will be aimed at improving parity



Drivers are set to join CTCRC's new Jaguar Challenge in 2022

between different models.

"There'll be some odd tweaks on some cars but, being a non-championship series, it's given us a year to develop [and] change the regulations if needed," said series coordinator Chris Robinson, the former JEC competitions secretary.

The Mike Hawthorn

Challenge and XK Challenge series for pre-1962 Jaguars, run in collaboration with the Aston Martin Owners' Club in recent years, will now be administered by the Classic & Modern Motorsport Club, with a series of races set to run primarily alongside Ecurie Classic Racing events.

MARK PAULSON



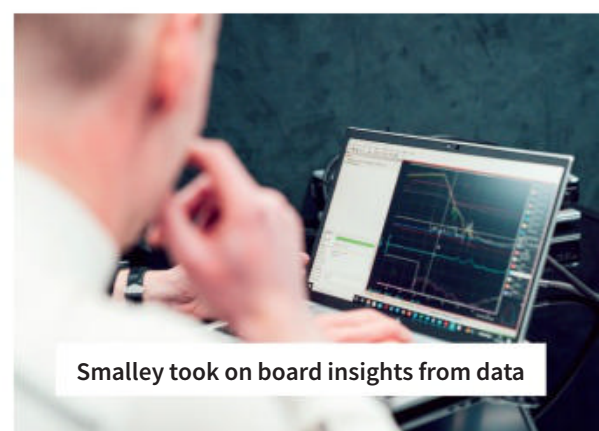
Hanafin (r) impressed by Smalley



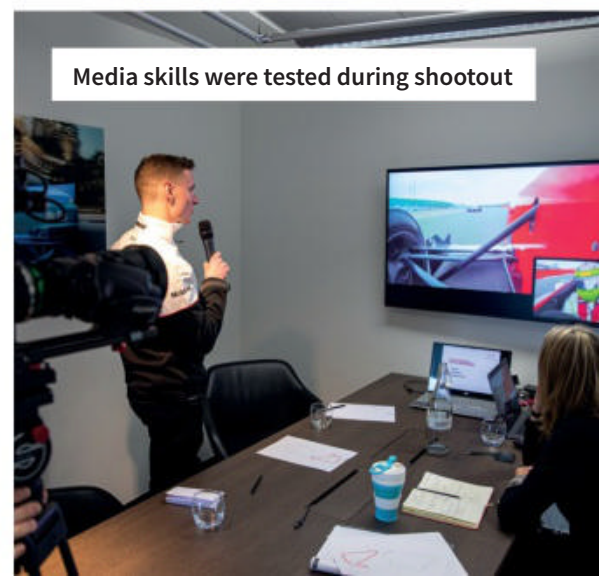
Type 992 911 GT3 Cup car is new



Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Smalley impressed the judging panel across all areas



Smalley took on board insights from data



Media skills were tested during shootout

HOW PORSCHE PICKED ITS NEXT POTENTIAL STAR

The Porsche GB Junior programme has been enormously successful in recent years and one of the reasons why is its meticulous selection process

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY PORSCHE

It is a bold strategy, given what's at stake. Newly crowned Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Adam Smalley is about to head out for his first run in the new Type 992 911 GT3 Cup car for Porsche GB's Junior shootout. But it's not just his first time in the car on this particular cold, cloudy November day at Silverstone, it will be his first outing in a Carrera Cup machine full stop. Unlike his fellow finalists – British GT4 champion Gus Burton, Porsche Sprint Challenge GB title winner Theo Edgerton and Formula Ford 1600 frontrunner Alex Walker – Smalley had elected not to test the car beforehand.

"I was speaking to my dad about it and originally we were thinking we would go and test to get a better chance," admits Smalley. "At the end of the day, I said the final four are all quick kids. Gus has won lots, so has Theo and Alex, so give us a few days in the car and we're all going to be there or thereabouts. But I wanted to show my potential and the purest form of myself. I was completely brand new to it and I'd never sat in the thing. That way I showed all the engineers this is me."

It was undoubtedly a gamble, especially given that the 911 GT3 Cup is a unique car to master and Smalley had spent the past five seasons racing Ginetta machinery, therefore was very much accustomed to the Yorkshire manufacturer's approach. But it was a gamble that paid off handsomely. Smalley sufficiently wowed the judging panel and landed the Junior prize: £85,000 towards each of the 2022 and 2023 Carrera Cup seasons and a wealth of different opportunities with Porsche.

One of the most impressive elements of Smalley's performance was the way in which he listened to the feedback he was given from his engineer, Porsche GB technical team manager Eddie Corr, and his driver coach for the day, 2021 Carrera Cup runner-up Lorcan Hanafin. For his first run, Smalley had no idea what to expect. "Because I'd never driven the car, I was driving it how I thought best and they told me to adapt it," says Smalley. "I then found 1.5 seconds."

Hanafin – who admits it felt a little "strange" to have gone "full circle" in the space of just two years, moving from taking part in the 2020-21 shootout to helping judge the 2022-23 contest – was suitably impressed. "The first and second runs were completely different," says Hanafin, who is actually two years younger than 21-year-old Smalley. "Everything we told him, he listened to and adapted his driving style to exactly

how it needs to be. It was very impressive."

Smalley adds: "You need to be fast but a big part of it is how you work with the team and how you develop." And that's one element he certainly showcased on that November day. Given the size of the opportunity on offer, and how it could lead on to a future factory drive, you would expect Smalley to have felt under pressure to perform. But, instead, he generally had a more relaxed mindset.

"I just tried to enjoy it," he recalls. "I really wanted to win and didn't want to put any pressure on myself. I knew I was up against some tough competition but didn't worry about anything and did my own thing. But it's not until you get to the hotel that night and sit down for a meal with everyone and think, 'This is very serious'. You wake up, put on your Porsche coat and the nerves do kick in at that point."

It is, after all, a very intense day. The driving is just one aspect of an assessment that ensures Porsche is picking the right person as its new Junior. Nothing is left to chance and extensive media and fitness tests are all part of the shootout. Louise Goodman puts the finalists through their paces with a series of quickfire

questions – including one about Porsche's GTE Pro performance in the World Endurance Championship the previous weekend that leaves some of the contenders squirming their way through an answer – along with a range of other interview scenarios,

while in the Porsche Human Performance Centre the fitness section includes press-ups, front and side planks, inverted rows, VO2 max, grip tests, BATAK reactions test... the list goes on.

There was also a new element to the shootout this year, with the finalists each undertaking a psychometric test beforehand. "That was something we introduced through the year as a bit of a pilot and we will definitely be including that element over the next two years," explains Porsche GB motorsport manager James MacNaughton. "It was very useful. With the added pressure drivers now have on them, sports psychology and making sure your head is in the right place, as well as driving skills and physical fitness and the way they speak to people, is as important as everything else."

But that attention to detail does not begin with the shootout itself, it's also evident in the earlier stages of the competition. MacNaughton says that deciding who should make the final is sometimes harder than choosing the new Junior. Around 50 entries were received this time around, which were whittled down to 12 who were interviewed by members of the Porsche team and then the final four had to be chosen. And, as with >>

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2022 CALENDAR



2/3 APRIL
SNETTERTON 300
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16 & 18 APRIL
OULTON PARK
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



7/8 MAY
SILVERSTONE GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



28/29 MAY
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



25/26 JUNE
SNETTERTON 300
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



30/31 JULY
SILVERSTONE GP
(GB3)



10/11 SEPTEMBER
BRANDS HATCH GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)



15/16 OCTOBER
DONINGTON PARK GP
(BRITISH GT/GB3)

many tough decisions, a spreadsheet came in handy.

“That first interview is the part where we’re wanting to understand and sit face-to-face and see what they’re like,” says MacNaughton. “We do realise how important it is for those drivers and want to make sure we’re making the right choice for us and for them. We have a spreadsheet and all the people who sit down and interview take notes and we’ll score each applicant and come away with a score at the end.”

From there, the finalists can be chosen and MacNaughton makes sure he is surrounded by a team of trusted experts to help make the call on the next Junior. It is a process that clearly works brilliantly given that each of the past four Juniors have gone on to be crowned Carrera Cup champion, Harry King – the other driver coach for this shootout – having joined predecessors Josh Webster, Charlie Eastwood and Dan Harper in achieving the feat.

But MacNaughton stresses that “every year is individual” and Porsche is not just looking for a “carbon copy” of drivers who have succeeded in the past. “We’re looking for the best person for the job,” he continues. “A big part of the selection process is what they’re like in the car. You could have someone who is a fantastic person in terms of fitness, is very level-headed and brilliant in front of a camera but, if they can’t drive a car, that’s not good. The driving is still a big part of it, but we’re not necessarily looking for the fastest person on the day.

“We know the amount of time someone has had in the car makes a big difference as well. If we get someone who comes in and has done three days of testing, they might be faster but they will have different things to improve on to a person who has no testing. It’s a very bespoke assessment for each of the drivers – it’s more bespoke than anything else [that was tested].”

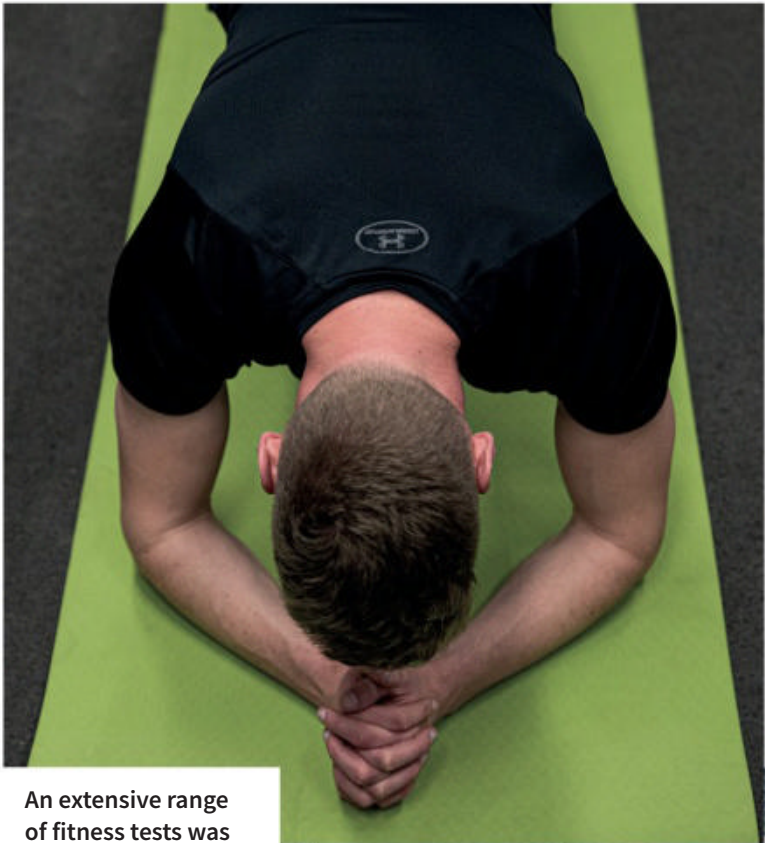
And that is again how Smalley was able to impress on the day. MacNaughton says he “came across very, very well” and was ranked top in each of the areas, albeit with it being “quite tight” in some of them. Not that Smalley knew about his success when the assessments had concluded.

“I remember phoning my dad and he said, ‘How was it?’” reflects Smalley. “I felt I hadn’t left anything on the table. But I didn’t think for a moment that I would win it. You had no idea what everyone else had done – and, not having

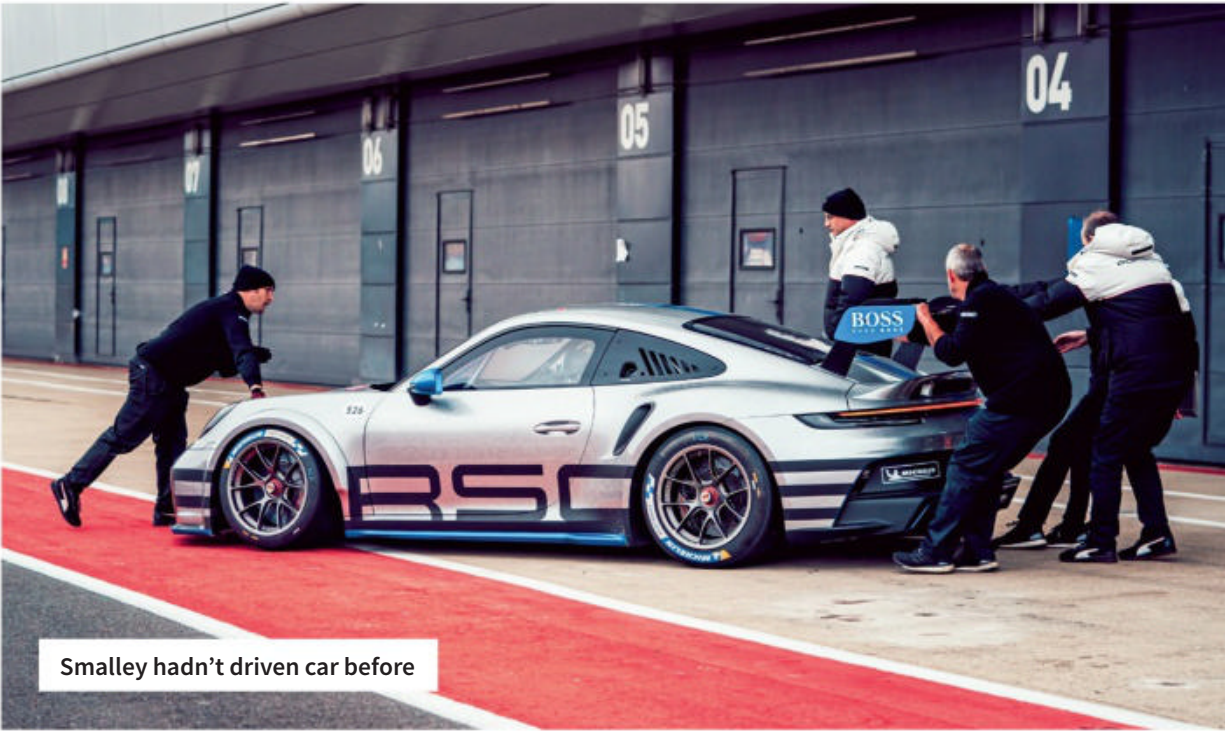
driven the car before, there was no reference. No matter the outcome, I could be happy with what I did. I was thinking, if I’ve won it, fantastic and, if I haven’t won it, well done to the person who did because they must’ve done a good job.”

As it turns out, it was Smalley who had done the good job. But now the hard work really begins – after all, he has got four very successful Juniors’ footsteps to follow in. And you can be sure that Smalley will be just a little more familiar with the Carrera Cup machine than he was for the shootout by the time the season gets under way. 🏁

“THE DRIVING IS A BIG PART OF IT, BUT WE’RE NOT NECESSARILY LOOKING FOR THE FASTEST PERSON ON THE DAY”



An extensive range of fitness tests was carried out, including VO2 max (below)



Smalley hadn't driven car before



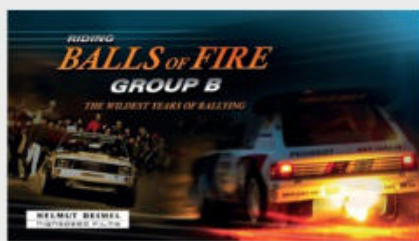
Driving skill is just one area assessed

Crowds line the stage as Henri Toivonen spurs his Lancia Delta S4 to victory on the Monte in 1986



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THE PEAK PERIODS FOR RALLYING AND BIKE RACING



DOCUMENTARY GROUP B: RIDING BALLS OF FIRE

Stream at
Motorsport.tv

A thrilling battle between Sebastien Loeb and Sebastien Ogier for victory at the fabled Monte Carlo Rally last weekend grabbed the attention of fans across the globe, and was the perfect launch for the new hybrid era of the World Rally Championship in 2022. Only time will tell how popular the new machinery will be with drivers, teams and fans, but to many they will be hard pressed to surpass those from the ‘golden age of rallying’: Group B.

These cars captivated fans in the mid-1980s with their immense power and speed, as well as the drivers who would push them to the very limit – and sometimes beyond.

For those wishing to relive the highs (and the lows) of the most powerful rally cars to hit the asphalt and gravel in the WRC’s history, Motorsport.tv has you covered with *Group B: Riding Balls of Fire*. The one-hour-and-40-minute documentary, put together by film-maker Helmut Deimel, charts the rise and fall of the category from when it began in 1983 until the cars were banned at the end of 1986 on safety grounds by the governing body.

The film states from the outset that although it celebrates the era, it “doesn’t gloss over Group B’s dark side, but it does show a whole lot of what made it so irresistible and so irreplaceable”. Slow-motion slides and spitting flames, all accompanied by high-pitched roars and shrills,

are frequent sights and sounds throughout, as Lancia Delta S4s and Audi Sport Quattros take centre stage in archive footage. As well as the high-speed action, some of the most compelling viewing is when the cars are being serviced, with crews working frantically on the battered and bruised machines, while the drivers receive treatment and the gruelling toll of controlling their rides becomes evident.

There are contemporary interviews with stars from the period such as Walter Rohrl, Ari Vatanen, Stig Blomqvist, Juha Kankkunen, Miki Biasion and more, all of whom reflect on the period with fondness despite the danger.

What becomes clear throughout the programme is the never-ending push by manufacturers to boost the performance of the cars, either through sheer power or the introduction of aerodynamic bodywork to generate greater downforce.

Viewers are transported back to another era where safety, both for the drivers and the fans, was a secondary thought. There’s certainly no shortage of footage of spectators getting too close for comfort,

including the harrowing discovery of two fingers inside the bodywork of a Peugeot! Sadly, the ‘dark side’ is an inevitable part of the Group B era, with the death of Attilio Bettega in 1985, the loss of several spectators on Rally Portugal, and most infamously the death of Henri Toivonen and co-driver Sergio Cresto on Rally Corsica all covered.

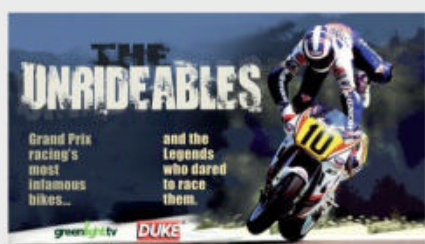
Although the cars were banned from competing in the WRC for 1987, the film ends by showing what they were truly capable of at the Pikes Peak Hillclimb with the incredible Audi Sport Quattro E2 and Peugeot 405 T16, and how their legacy lives on today.

“IT DOESN’T GLOSS OVER THE DARK SIDE, BUT DOES SHOW WHAT MADE IT IRRESISTIBLE”



Lawson gives his take on an extraordinary era

GILBERT



DOCUMENTARY THE UNRIDEABLES SERIES

Stream at
Motorsport.tv

If two-wheel action is more to your liking then Motorsport.tv has 500cc action from the late 1980s to the early 1990s with *The Unrideables* series. The first of the two episodes begins in 1987, when American Eddie Lawson took on Australian Wayne Gardner for the title, with Gardner, coming out on top, as they try to tame the raw power and brutal handling of their bikes. Lawson's move to Honda and subsequent title, and the rise of Wayne Rainey and rivalry with Kevin Schwantz, are the main focus of the series, which runs through until the 1993 season.

Among the riders contributing to the programme are Lawson, Gardner, Schwantz and Rainey, who recount incidents and highlights from their careers. It all culminates in Rainey having his career-ending and life-changing accident at Misano in 1993, which left him paralysed from the waist down.

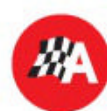
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Motorsport.tv, one of Autosport's sister brands, has both free and premium (paywall) content. Paid subscribers can watch WEC (aside from Le Mans) and Super GT rounds live, and have access to the Duke Videos archive and *The 24 Hours of Le Mans: The Great History*, the only place you can get all the official ACO reviews in one place. Live Super Formula and European Le Mans Series races are part of the free offering.

FINISHING STRAIGHT



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



The cars of Formula 1's new era hit the track next month for the start of pre-season testing, and although they appear sleeker and simpler, drivers have been suggesting that the machines will be harder to drive than before. Autosport's Jake Boxall-Legge takes a closer look at the changes and how they might affect the racing. Go to youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

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Rounds 1-2/16

Diriyah, Saudi Arabia

28-29 January

TV Live Channel 4 Sport
YouTube, Fri 1630,

Eurosport 2, Fri 1700,
Channel 4, Sat 1630,
Eurosport 2 1630

Daytona 24 Hours

IMSA SportsCar

Round 1/12

Daytona, USA

29-30 January

Formula Regional Asian

Round 2/5

Dubai, UAE

29-30 January

Livestream on
motorsport.tv, Sat 0700,
Sun 0650, Sun 1035



BAGNALL
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FINISHING STRAIGHT

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Patrick Depailler (Tyrrell-Ford 008) had come very close to taking his first grand prix win at Kyalami in South Africa in 1978, missing out on the last lap to the Lotus-Ford 78 of Ronnie Peterson, and had scored two other podium finishes in the first four rounds of the season. So when fortune smiled on him at round five in Monaco, pictured, he wasn't about to let the opportunity escape him. While Carlos Reutemann (Ferrari 312T3) squandered his pole position, Depailler made a brilliant start from fifth on the grid to find himself in second place behind John Watson's Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT46. At half-distance a brief off for Watson caused by fading brakes was all the invitation Depailler needed and the Frenchman then led to the flag, followed home by Watson's team-mate Niki Lauda and the Wolf-Ford WR1 of Jody Scheckter.



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Daniel Juncadella

MY FAVOURITE... Car

FERRARO
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IMAGES

2013 Williams-Renault FW35

The Williams-Renault partnership produced some highly successful Formula 1 cars. But it's perhaps the least-remembered of the family, the FW35, that resonates with Daniel Juncadella as his favourite car.

The most recent Williams-Renault was the final V8 machine to roll out of Grove, and scored just five points in the hands of Valtteri Bottas and Pastor Maldonado. Juncadella sampled it over two days during the Silverstone rookie test. "It was an absolute rocket," he recalls. "For me, the V8s were the ultimate experience."

In the early phases of a career that has been closely intertwined with Mercedes for the past decade, the then-DTM rookie's appearance at F1's 2013 Silverstone test with a Renault-powered squad wasn't

without risk. But because Mercedes was banned from participating after revelations of its three-day in-season tyre test at Barcelona, 2012 European Formula 3 champion Juncadella's best chance of logging valuable F1 mileage at the test was gone, leaving Williams as his only option.

"I was still aiming to have a shot at F1 and I was testing for Mercedes F1 in the simulator," explains the factory Mercedes GT ace. "My sponsor from F3, Astana, had some budget we could use. It was my only opportunity to get mileage in an F1 car."

Although Toto Wolff and the Mercedes hierarchy "was not super-happy" about the test because of the Renault link, Juncadella delivered by impressing the Williams engineers and outpacing Maldonado.

Juncadella believes he was the team's first pick to be its reserve driver in 2014, but by the time his manager heard this from Claire Williams he had signed with Force India, having been led to believe that his sponsorship package could not match that of eventual pick Felipe Nasr.

Juncadella was a Force India Friday regular in 2014, but preferred the purity of the normally aspirated 2013-spec Williams. "It was a shame we got the call from Williams when it was a bit late," he says. "The car was actually pretty good."

JAMES NEWBOLD



FERRARO/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Leclerc and Sainz

CAN FERRARI'S STARS CHALLENGE FOR THE F1 CROWN?

ANDRE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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